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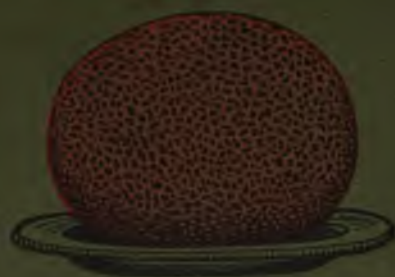
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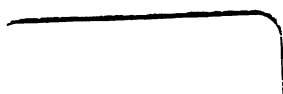
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THE CHRISTMAS  
PUDDING

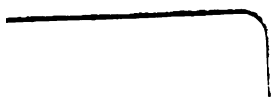


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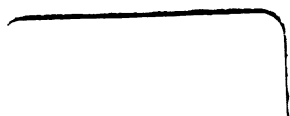
















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# A CHRISTMAS PUDDING

FOR YOUNG EATERS.



# A CHRISTMAS PUDDING

FOR YOUNG EATERS

*IN THREE PARTS*

By L. C. SKEY

AUTHOR OF 'THE HOLLY BOUGH,' 'DOLLY'S OWN STORY,'  
ETC., ETC.

GRIFFITH & FARRAN

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THIS BOOK  
is Dedicated  
TO MY TWELVE CHILDREN,  
WITH THE FONDEST LOVE,

*By their Mother,*

L. C. SKEY.





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# A CHRISTMAS PUDDING

*FOR YOUNG EATERS.*

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## Part I.

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### CHRISTMAS-TIDE.

WHEN the holly brightly gleams,  
And carols we are singing ;  
Among our Christmas melodies  
A minor chord is ringing ;

A chord composed of many notes,  
On heart-strings loud resounding ;  
Borne on the wind from far and near,  
Each happy hearth surrounding.

It is the cry of hungry souls,  
Both pain and sorrow feeling ;  
Of children homeless and alone,  
Of wounds that ask for healing.

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'Then in your gleeful Christmas mirth,  
'Mid many a song and ditty,  
Remember those in pain and want,  
With Christian love and pity.

And as you sit beside your fire,  
Your parents fond caressing ;  
Your bliss will gain a thousandfold,  
From these poor sad folk's blessing.





# THE CROWN OF ROSES ; OR, A VISIT TO FAIRYLAND.

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## CHAPTER I.

### ABOUT FAIRYLAND.



OF course all children have heard something about Fairyland, though I don't think they know quite where it is, and I am afraid I can't tell them.

It is the country where fairies live, and that is almost all we can say about it ; but one great charm about it certainly is, that children who go there always find whatever they like best. Those who care about pretty scenery, with flowers and trees and mountains and valleys, are sure to find them ; if they delight in seeing pretty rivers and springs of waters, they will find them there, and there you may enjoy them as they wind through groves of shady trees, or splash over rocks in little bubbling, foaming waterfalls.

One child I knew, declared that the Fairyland he delighted in, was a huge confectioner's shop, quite full

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of mince-pies, buns, and ginger-beer. You will say this was a very strange idea of Fairyland, and so I think, but then, you see, some like one thing, and some another.

Well, the little girl I am going to tell you about, dearly loved to hear about Fairies. Her name was Milly Grey, and she was about ten years old when my story begins. She was a nice, bright, happy child, not very fond of her lessons, and, like most other children, rather more fond of play than of work. Milly was rather lonely sometimes, for she had no brothers or sisters, and as she lived quite in the country, she had not many companions. She had a governess who came every day, and when the governess was gone, she used to spend most of her time with her mother. If, however, her mother was out or busy, Milly would play with her dolls till she was tired, and then she would curl herself round in a large easy-chair, with her little white woolly dog in her arms, and a large book of Fairy Tales on her knee, and then she thought herself quite happy.

There you might have seen her one winter's evening when Mrs Grey was away, her arm-chair pulled up close to a bright fire in her cosy little schoolroom, the red curtains drawn in front of the window, and the canary asleep in his pretty cage, pussy rolled up on the soft rug by the fire, and Floss, the little white dog, asleep in Milly's arms. The lamp-light fell brightly on the big book of fairy tales which rested on Flossie's back, and Milly was so absorbed in her reading she took no notice of her companions, and the room was so still, you could have heard the ticking of the little clock on the mantelpiece, and you never would have believed a little child could be there.

Milly had sat thus for a long time, when she gave a great sigh and said out loud, as she shut her book,—

‘Oh, dear, how I *should* like to go into Fairyland just for one day, to see if it’s as pretty as the pictures in this book.’

Milly sat still after saying this, looking into the fire and thinking about the pretty pictures of groves and fountains, and fairy dances by moonlight, when suddenly a sound startled her from her musings. She thought at first it was her little clock striking seven, but then it sounded more like a little bell ringing in the distance. She listened wondering what it could be, till, on looking up, she saw a sight which quite filled her with wonder and amazement.





## CHAPTER II.

### THE FAIRY VISITORS.

**W**ELL might Milly start with glad surprise, and perhaps a little fear, at the sight she saw. Just fancy, the room was quite full of fairies, such pretty little creatures with their white dresses and fluttering wings, some holding wands and some ringing little silver bells, which produced the sounds Milly had heard.

At first the fairies were all clustered together like a little white cloud, but as Milly looked at them, the cloud parted in the middle, leaving a path guarded on each side by fairy wands, and those who held the bells joined hands overhead, forming pretty arches, from the centre of which hung two little tinkling bells.

Milly looked on, too astonished to speak, and she thought to herself, What a pretty road they have made ; how I wish I was small enough to walk down it. Who can it be for ? She had not long to wonder. The fairies now all began to sing a sweet chorus. These are the words they sang,—

‘Hasten, Fays, your Queen to greet,  
Strew her path with roses sweet,  
Tinkling bells soft music make,  
Your Queen is come, arise, awake.’

As Milly was listening with delight to the fairies' song, she was further surprised by a bright light which filled all the room, and made the fairies' white dresses and silver bells shine like diamonds. Milly's eyes were dazzled for a moment by the light, but as they became more accustomed to its brightness, she saw with wonder that a procession was coming slowly along under the arch formed by the fairy hands and tinkling bells.

First came two tiny trumpeters with silver trumpets, and gaily dressed in scarlet and gold. These were followed by a standard-bearer, carrying a large banner on which the Royal Arms were emblazoned in every colour of the rainbow. Then came twenty maids of honour, pretty little fairies dressed in blue and silver, with forget-me-not flowers for caps on their heads. Behind these came the six royal pages, tiny boy fairies, dressed in pairs to imitate different flowers, the two first in purple velvet and gold, like pansies, the next two in red and purple, like fuchsias, and the two last in red and gold, like tulips. Then came the royal carriage, drawn by six white rats, whose harness was covered with tiny bells, every one of which made a sweet sound as they moved.

The carriage was very much like Milly's new doll's perambulator, but all of gold, and in it sat the Fairy Queen. Her dress was of white, sprinkled with diamond dust, and a crown, cut out of a single diamond, decked her head. In her hand she held a glittering sceptre, and a veil of the finest gossamer fell over her from her crown to her tiny feet.

As the carriage came towards Milly, a cloud of most delicious fragrance filled the air, and Milly found that it came from the pillows and cushions on which the Queen reclined, which were all made of the sweetest and loveliest flowers.

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Milly was not at all sure how she ought to address so grand a personage, but as the glittering cortege drew up close to her, she scrambled down off her chair, and spreading out her frock at each side, she made a very low curtsy, trying hard to follow the instructions of her dancing master at the last lesson.

Her majesty seemed gratified at the salutation, for she returned the greeting with a low bow, and a very gracious smile, and in a voice like the sweetest Jew's harp you ever heard, she said to Milly,—

‘We have heard that you are anxious to visit our realm of Fairyland, and as we know you to be a good child, and deserving of our royal favour, we are come ourselves to invite you to pay us a visit, and we hope to encourage you to still further goodness, by showing you the rewards we bestow on those mortals who by their good deeds can earn them.’

So saying, she held out her hand to Milly, who was rather surprised to find that she was now small enough to get into the carriage as the Queen invited her, and she sank down comfortably on the sweet-scenting flower pillows which formed the luxurious resting-place of her tiny majesty. Then the trumpeters blew their silver trumpets, and amid a perfect clatter of sweet sounds, tinkling bells and fairy music, the carriage drove off, surrounded by the cloud of gay attendants who formed the royal suite; and Milly was quite bewildered by all the new sights and sounds which surrounded her, as she was whirled away on her journey.





## CHAPTER III.

### THE VISIT TO FAIRYLAND.

**F**OR some time after Milly found herself in the carriage of the Fairy Queen, she seemed lost in a kind of trance ; she could not have told you which way she went, or what she saw on her journey ; she had only a confused notion of having passed by rivers, trees, and hills, all of which were quite unfamiliar to her. At last, after what seemed to her a long time, she was roused from her dreamy state by the carriage stopping, while the trumpeters blew repeated blasts on their silver horns. Milly started up, and on looking round, she saw that the carriage had stopped before two massive gates which shone like silver, flanked by stone towers.

‘This is the gate of our principal city,’ the Queen explained, as the gates were opened to admit the cortege. ‘Our palace is here, and here we can show you many of the wonders of our land. We will summon our Lord Chamberlain, who will act as your guide, and to his care we commend you.’

As the Queen spoke, there came from one of the towers an official personage of great importance, gorgeously apparelled in a velvet cloak, and carrying a

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jewelled mace in his hand. He now came forward with a low bow, and giving his hand to Milly, helped her to alight from the carriage, and the Queen waved her a gracious farewell, as her six steeds whirled her away to her palace, whose turrets could be seen above the tops of the trees which crowned a neighbouring hill. Who shall describe the wonders that Milly saw with her new guide?

He took her first through the great buildings of the town. Here she saw the dolls' palace, a magnificent edifice devoted entirely to dolls. They lived there in the greatest luxury and comfort, according to their different degrees. There were splendid kitchens for the servant dolls, in which were all the articles they could require for their household work. There were nurseries for the baby dolls, who slept in cots made lovely with silk and lace. There were dining-rooms, with feasts already spread, including every delicacy dolls delight in, both in season and out. There were drawing-rooms, full of the very smartest ladies and gentlemen dolls, some seated at the pianos, some dancing, and others sitting and standing about.

Milly of course was charmed with all she saw, but she felt in her heart of hearts that this was not quite her idea of Fairyland; it seemed too real, she thought. So she only waited in the dolls' palace to dress or undress a few of the baby dollies, and then she was quite ready to follow her guide in search of new wonders.

Their next visit was to the sugar palace. Here they found magnificent halls full of every kind of cake and sweetmeat; there were great rooms entirely filled with piles of delicious fruits—strawberries, raspberries, apples, and plums, while clusters of most tempting grapes hung from the roof, just within easy reach of children's fingers.

There were piles on piles of pastry and cakes of every description, preserves of all sorts, jellies, and every sort of ice.

At first Milly exclaimed in delight as she saw the fruits and tasted the beautiful grapes which almost touched her head, but still she felt rather disappointed.

‘I should soon be ill,’ she said to herself, ‘if I were to eat even the contents of one table here, and the sight and smell of so many, many good things is quite sickening ; I never thought Fairyland would be like this.’

So, with a little sigh, she turned again to the Lord Chamberlain, who said,—

‘Now you have seen some of the principal buildings in this part of the royal city, which *idle* children love ; now I will show you some of the treats our Queen prepares for children who delight in books and work. For boys there are halls of science and chemistry, and workshops where everything can be made that you can think of ; and I will show you what we have for girls.’

So saying, he led her over a wide bridge which crossed a lovely river, and they then entered another street in which were several more splendid buildings, even larger and more magnificent than those they had seen before.

Here he showed her marvellous schools of needlework and painting, and whole libraries of books suited to children’s tastes.

Milly fairly screamed with delight when they entered a large library full of story books, all shining, lovely pictures outside, as well as inside.

She threw herself on the floor, with a pile of these books round her, and would soon have forgotten where she was, but that she was reminded of her whereabouts by a picture in one of the books. The picture repre-

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sented fairies dancing on the grass in a moonlit scene of wood and water.

'*That's* what I want to see,' said Milly, jumping up and scattering the books. 'I want to see the groves and caves I have read about, and seen at the Christmas pantomime; I can see books and dolls and sweets at home.'

'Come then,' said her fairy guide, 'and we will leave the halls of science, as you are too old fashioned to care for them, and let us ramble about in search of the scenes you long to see.'

Milly joyfully agreed, and the two wandered away from the streets and thoroughfares of the city, down towards the river's bank. Their path now lay through soft grass and gay flowers under the shade of lofty trees, and soon they reached a short flight of marble steps which led down to the river. Here they stopped, and the Lord Chamberlain drew a silver whistle from his pocket and sent forth a shrill call into the silence of the woods.

Instantly there appeared in answer to his summons a tiny skiff, manned by fairy rowers in glittering attire of blue and silver; they brought their boat to the foot of the steps, and after saluting the Lord Chamberlain, silently awaited his commands.

'Come,' he said to the astonished Milly, as he held out his hand to lead her to the boat, 'and we will seek the groves and caves we fairies love so well.'

Milly soon found herself gently floating down the stream, dreamily gazing at the wooded banks by which they passed, and listening to the sweet music of the song with which the fairy oarsmen beguiled their toil. At last the boat turned out of the main current of the stream into a small outlet almost too narrow for the tiny craft, and well nigh dark from the thickness of the boughs which arched it overhead.

Soon the boat stopped, and Milly looked round for a landing-place, but she saw nothing but the mossy bank in the thick grove of trees. The Lord Chamberlain, however, here sounded a silver horn which Milly had seen suspended by a chain round his neck, and forthwith there appeared a tiny archway in the mossy bank, leading into a narrow passage where shone a soft light like the lustre of a myriad glow-worms' sheen.

Milly followed her guide into the mysterious passage, and soon strains of the most entrancing music greeted her ears. She could see nothing in the soft, dim light, though she strained her eyes to the utmost, but ever the music waxed louder and louder, nearer and still more near.

After what seemed to Milly quite a long time, they reached a heavy oaken door, with iron hinges and studded with large nails. Here the Lord Chamberlain paused, and gave three distinct knocks on the door with his mace. It opened immediately, and as the loud burst of music startled Milly, she beheld a scene which she never in after years could forget. The door opened into a vast hall, or rather cave, the roof of which was supported by innumerable pillars and arches, all formed of glittering crystals, which also formed the floor and roof. A brilliant light, bright as the noontide sun, illuminated this dazzling hall, and was reflected from the crystal arches in a thousand rainbow hues. Tropical plants shed their fragrance around, or formed with their luxuriant foliage, a welcome rest for eyes well nigh dazzled by the brilliant scene. In the centre of the hall, a fountain of rose-scented water threw a sparkling column to the roof, which descended again in myriad bright drops with a soft, drowsy splash, disturbing the gold fish who swam dreamily about in the huge crystal basin which received the dropping water as it fell. Round the fountain was a group of fairies, who

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realised Milly's dreams, or, indeed, far surpassed them, so lovely were they in form and colouring. No two were dressed alike, but the colours were so exquisitely blended, that even when they were dancing, no two colours ever came together which did not harmonise. They all wore tiny stars on their foreheads, which glittered as they danced; and they carried little bells which formed a continuous accompaniment to the music of the orchestra.

For some time Milly looked about in vain to find the band who were making such merry music, but at last she discovered that the sweet sounds proceeded from a gallery above, shut in by a thick screen of plants and shrubs, which completely hid the musicians from her view. Milly was so charmed with this lovely scene, that she quite lost herself in the intensity of her delight, and gazed and gazed with an ever new sense of pleasure, till her guide recalled her to herself by tapping her gently on the shoulder.

'We must go on,' he said; 'we have other scenes to visit, which you will enjoy as much as this.'

'Never, never,' said Milly, turning reluctantly away; 'I can never in my whole life see anything so beautiful as this. Oh! how I should like to stay here always.'

'Wait till I have shown you all you have yet to see,' he replied, 'and then you shall tell me what you think of Fairyland.'

So saying, the little Lord Chamberlain led his companion from the glittering crystal hall; but they did not leave it by the same way they had come. They walked the whole length of the hall, and left it by a door at the further end, which opened into a huge conservatory. Here Milly would have liked to linger among the fragrant blossoms of every hue, which surrounded her, but her guide passed on through their

midst, and Milly did not like to delay him. From the conservatory they passed into a wonderful aviary, where Milly saw birds of every country and clime, living in the trees and shrubs which each would have inhabited in his own country. They did not seem to know they were captives, so joyous was their song, as they flew from tree to tree, or sat trimming their gay plumage on the brim of the fountain, which sent up its refreshing waters in their midst. Here Milly rambled about for some time watching the many strange birds she had never seen before, and asking numberless questions about them, of her companion. But at last he reminded her that they had farther to go, and carried her off through the orange grove which surrounded the aviary.

Who shall tell of the delights of their lovely walk through groves and dells, by brook and lake and mountain?

Milly saw every scene she had read and dreamt of since she began to read the 'Fairy Lake' she loved so well, only, unlike the things of our world, she found the reality far surpassed in beauty, the visions she had imagined before.

She visited some tree fairies, who lived inside the trunks of the trees, in the most mysterious little dwellings; she talked to the river fays, who came to the bank in little boats of sea-shells, or on rafts made of floating lily leaves. Even the elves who live in the mines far below the surface of the earth, came up through mysterious outlets from their subterranean houses, to welcome her to the country of the Queen, while at every step she was greeted by the king fairies, who live in the flowers, and came and stood bowing and smiling at her from the many gay petals which form their fragrant home. Milly's wanderings brought her at last to the very centre

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of a leafy grove, where she sank down to rest on the mossy bank of a lawn, completely surrounded and over-arched by forest trees. The moon had now risen, and was shedding her soft light over the peaceful scene. The birds were all silent and asleep, except the nightingale, whose sweet song only added to the soothing influences around.

Milly leant against a tree and closed her eyes, and soon was fast asleep, but not for long. She was roused by a soft sound of many voices singing, which seemed at first a part of a dream, but as the sound became more distinct it woke her, and rousing up, she found that the whole plateau on which she lay, was crowded with fairy forms, gliding hither and thither as they sang a sweet cadence, of which these words formed a part,—

‘Sleep not, mortal, wake and rise,  
Fair scenes shall greet your opening eyes ;  
Elves command you dance and sing,  
Kind welcome from our Queen we bring.  
Sound sweet voices, tinkle bells,  
Fairies love the moonlit dells.’

As they sang, they formed themselves into groups for dancing ; then a procession appeared of elves carrying torches, which they distributed among the dancers, and to the music of the fairy voices, accompanied by the nightingale’s song, the dance began.

I need not tell you children how much Milly enjoyed the scene ; and her delight knew no bounds when two little fays came to her, and seizing her hands, dragged her into the middle of the dance. Greatly to her surprise, Milly found she was quite small, like the other dancers, only she had no wings and no star on her head, as they had. She found, too, that the step

and the figures of the dance were quite familiar to her, and she danced away as nimbly and as merrily as the tiniest fay of them all.

Even a fairy ball, however, must come to an end some time, as well as more earthly festivities; and after a bit the music changed, and all the dancers stood in a big ring and began singing—

‘Mortal, now our dance is o’er,  
Soon will chime the midnight hour;  
Hasten, fays, do our behest,  
Arise, prepare our fairy feast.  
Sound sweet voices, tinkle bells,  
Fairies love the moonlit dells.’

As they sang, Milly saw, with intense wonder, that in the centre of the ring formed by the fairies, a large hole appeared, and through this hole there presently came up a table like a huge white mushroom, on which was spread such a feast as she had never seen or dreamt of, for it consisted of everything she liked best to eat; all her favourite cakes, tarts, and sweetmeats were there, and they drank sweet milk from the cocoanut, or crystal water from the bubbling brook close by.

At last a faint sound was heard in the far distance, like the striking of a clock, and in one moment the whole scene had changed—table, feast, and fairies had all disappeared, and Milly found herself seated on the ground where she had fallen asleep, her faithful guide, the little Lord Chamberlain, waiting patiently at her side.





## CHAPTER IV.

### THE GREAT PRIZE.

**A**S Milly started up and rubbed her eyes, feeling as if she had wakened from a delirious dream, her companion came forward, and said with a gracious bow,—

‘Now, young lady, I have shown you a few of the wonders of our land, and the life we fairies lead. I am further instructed by our noble Queen, to convey you to her summer palace, and there to show you some of the *rewards* she keeps for children of the earth, to encourage them in trying to be good. The palace itself no mortal is allowed to enter, but her Majesty invites you to go and inspect her gallery of prizes, which will, I hope, incite you to great diligence and perseverance, and she has even instructed me to show you the great prize of all, which but few are even permitted to *see*, and which fewer still are so fortunate as to *win*.’

So saying, he led Milly to the end of the wood, and there she found one of the royal carriages awaiting her. She quickly stepped into it, and the six white mice who drew it, soon conveyed her to the outer gate of the summer palace of the fairy Queen.

Here they alighted, and passed through the most

lovely gardens, brilliant with flowers of every hue, while birds of the gayest plumage fluttered amongst the gorgeous foliage, and made the air joyous with their song.

From the garden, Milly was conducted into a building which formed the outer court of the palace, beyond which no mortal can pass. Here they mounted a broad marble staircase, which led up to a long gallery, divided into separate compartments, by curtains of crimson and gold. The first apartment in this gallery was full of the things children most like for presents,—picture books, puzzles, and toys of many descriptions; there were Christmas trees, and birthday cakes, and rocking-horses, and dolls' houses, and even 'bran-pies,' and peep-shows—everything that children could wish for as rewards.

'These are the prizes for good little boys and girls who are obedient to their parents, and kind to their brothers and sisters,' the Lord Chamberlain informed Milly. 'These presents are given by the Queen to their uncles, and aunts, and god-mothers, who present them to the children. There are many more rooms full of prizes, but you won't care to see those intended for *boys*, so I shall only show you one more, before we look at the Great Prize of all.' Then pushing aside a curtain, he led her into another room in the gallery, which Milly thought at first was empty, but on looking at it more carefully, she found the walls were entirely covered with stockings, hung up against the wall in long rows. Milly thought this very odd, and she was just beginning to wonder to herself, why the stockings were all single, instead of being arranged in pairs. She was also wondering why they were all *blue*, when her companion explained the mystery to her, saying,—

'Here you see the prizes for the little girls who are

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very diligent at their lessons, or learn a great many difficult things, and prefer work to play.'

'What funny prizes!' Milly exclaimed. 'I don't think I should care to have an old stocking for a prize, if I had been working very hard at my lessons.'

'Ah! but you don't understand,' the Lord Chamberlain replied. 'You are an old-fashioned child, and you haven't been taught like the children are now-a-days. Formerly her Majesty would give picture books and presents, as prizes for proficiency in learning, but children now-a-days don't care for these things, so her Majesty has decided to give these as rewards. To each of these learned young ladies, she presents one of these stockings; they are magic stockings, and whoever puts one on, finds they can climb to the very top of the ladder of learning, without any trouble.'

'Well,' said Milly, 'I'd rather be old-fashioned, and have a pretty present, than be so clever that I had only one of those stupid old stockings for a prize.'

'I'm not sure that the Queen doesn't agree with you,' the Lord Chamberlain replied, smiling, as they quitted the abode of the blue stockings.—'Now we will seek the Great Prize,' he said, as he led Milly to the very end of the gallery, when they paused before a gorgeous curtain of blue and red and gold.

Here he blew his little silver horn three times, and immediately the curtains were drawn aside, revealing a small room brilliantly lighted, at the far end of which was a canopied recess, hung with draperies of white and gold.

On each side of this alcove stood a fairy, glittering in gold-sprinkled raiments, and holding a jewelled wand in her hand. At a signal from the Lord Chamberlain, the attendant fairies drew back the curtains which shrouded

the recess, and revealed to Milly's wondering gaze the Great Prize of the Fairy land.

It was a crown of roses, consisting of four lovely blossoms, with leaves between—one yellow, one pink, one red, and one white; but though they were like the roses of earth, in form and colour, Milly soon saw that they were far more precious, for each flower was encrusted with tiny diamonds, which besprinkled its petals like drops of dew.

'Oh! what lovely roses!' Milly exclaimed, as she went close up to the velvet cushion on which the flowery chaplet lay. 'I wish *we* had roses like these.'

'These flowers were all gathered on your earth,' said one of the attendant fairies. 'They were plucked by a poor little suffering child of earth, and we have woven them into this immortal crown, which is waiting for her here.'

'But where could she have found such roses?' Milly asked eagerly. 'Do tell me, that I may seek them too.'

'Would you know the secret of these flowers?' the fairy replied. 'Come and I will show you, that you may seek them too; but you must be brave and keep a good heart, for they are hard to find.'

The fairy then drew from between the petals of the yellow rose a tiny scroll, on which were inscribed these lines,—

*'Humility, that lovely grace,  
Happy mortal, thou hast found;  
With my blossoms pure and sweet,  
Shall thy modest brow be crowned.'*

'What does it mean?' asked Milly, looking puzzled. 'These lines don't tell me where to seek that lovely rose.'

'Yes, indeed they do,' the fairy answered, as she

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replaced the scroll. 'Those only who are possessed of a *meek* and *humble* spirit, can find that rose; to them alone is its abiding place revealed. Seek to attain to the humility, and the rose will be yours.'

'Oh dear!' sighed Milly; 'I shall never find the yellow rose, I know, for people call me proud, and I fear I am.'

'Hope on,' said the fairy cheerily. 'To know your faults is to be half way towards correcting them. Persevere, and you will find the yellow rose, and we will take care of it for you, till your garland is complete.'

Milly still looked rather downcast, but she looked at the *pink* rose, and asked,—

'Is this rose, too, so hard to find?'

'I don't wish to discourage you,' the fairy said, kindly; 'but I think it is more difficult to find this rose than the other one. See what the scroll says.'

She drew out the tiny scroll and read this,—

'Tis mine in the great name of *Truth*,  
A flowery crown to wreath,  
For those whose lips in early youth,  
True words alone will breathe.'

When the fairy ceased reading, Milly thought for a minute, then she said,—

'I think I might be able to find the pink rose, for I have always been taught to hate a lie, and I do try to speak the truth.'

'Yes,' said the fairy, 'but the pink rose is rather hard to find, for you must not only be careful to *speak* the truth, but you must be careful not to *hide* the truth, nor to *exaggerate*. You must be true in thought and in act, as well as in word, and then alone can you add this rose to your crown.'

'Now do tell me,' said Milly, 'where to look for the

red rose? That looks like a very rare one. I fear it is very hard to find.'

'You are right,' said the fairy. 'Many people who have found all the other roses, miss their crown because they can't find this one. Many a tiring journey must be taken, and many a fall suffered, before it is reached, but you shall hear what the scroll tells you, about the red rose.'

She accordingly withdrew the little scroll from between the velvet petals of the flower, and read as follows:—

'I will give my blossoms rare  
The patient soul to grace;  
The richest virtues lose their crown  
Where *Patience* finds no place.'

'Oh dear! oh dear!' sighed Milly when she had heard the lines, 'I shall never, never win the crown. I am so impatient, I never like to wait for anything. If I can't get a thing at once, I don't care for it at all.'

'Then you never will gain the crown; but I hope the sight of the prize which is to reward your success, will encourage you to try hard, to be patient as well as humble and true.'

Milly looked very grave, as if still rather doubtful as to her success, but she turned now to the *white* rose, exclaiming,—

'Oh! how perfectly lovely this one is! I never, never saw such a beautiful flower. If there is one to be found like that one, I will never tire of looking for it.'

'I think you will find it, though it is not easy to get,' the fairy answered, smiling. 'It is far the most lovely flower in the crown, and if you examine it, you will see that the diamonds with which it is sprinkled, are larger and more brilliant than those on any of the other flowers. But now I will read you the scroll, and mind you remember it, for this flower must be sought very earnestly or it can't be found.'

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The scroll contained these words,—

‘*Charity*, the queen of virtues,  
Sent her gentle grace to thee,  
Kind, unselfish lives so holy  
Shall rewarded be by me.’

‘Now,’ said the fairy, as she finished reading, ‘you have seen some of the wonders of our land, and you have seen the Great Prize which our Queen purposes for those who are *humble, truthful, patient, and unselfish*. I hope you are going to try, when you return to your home, to win the crown of roses, and that some day I may have the pleasure of placing it on your head. We shall watch over you, and do all we can to help you, in your search for the roses, and as you find each one, the fairy who guards it will point it out to you, and will receive it at your hands, to bring it here, and confide it to our care. When the crown is complete, we will send for you again.’

‘Oh! I do hope I shall come again,’ said Milly. ‘I never was so happy in my life. I do love Fairyland. I should like to stay here always.’

‘Nay, nay,’ said the fairy, smiling, ‘if you lived here always, perhaps you would not be so happy as you think, for you are a being of earth, and your work lies there. Go back and practise the lessons we have tried to teach you, and in seeking the roses to form your crown, you will find more happiness than you would ever attain to here. Adieu, fair child of earth! Fare thee well!’

So saying, the beautiful fairies dropped the curtains they had been holding back, and vanished behind them.

Milly stood thinking over all she had seen and heard, quite lost to all around her, till the Lord Chamberlain came forward to remind her that they must return.

They once more entered the royal carriage which had brought them to the palace, and which now conveyed them speedily to the outer gate of the city.

Here the Lord Chamberlain alighted, after taking a kind farewell of Milly, and she continued her journey by rock and river, lake and mountain, the rural scenery of Fairyland.

Whether the rapid motion of the equipage made her sleepy, or whether she was fatigued by her long journey, I know not, but certain it is that after a time Milly fell fast asleep, and what was her surprise on waking to find herself back in her snug little schoolroom, lying curled up in her big arm-chair, where her fairy visitors had found her ! She rubbed her eyes and looked round her, thinking she must have had a wonderful dream, but when she remembered the crown of roses, she said to herself,—

‘It must be real, because I have a *real* thing to do. I shall begin at once to try and find the roses, and as I seek them I shall be constantly reminded of my charming visit to that dear, delightful, beautiful, glorious, Fairyland !’





## Part II.

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### CHAPTER V.

#### THE YELLOW ROSE.

**T**IME went by. Milly had a great deal to do. Of course, as she got older, she had more lessons to learn, and more practising to do. She had drawing and dancing lessons, too, and a pony to ride, and her garden to attend to, so she was a very busy little girl, and she was generally very happy and very good. Certainly she had not many trials of temper, for being an only child, she was very much petted by those around her, and there were no other children to contradict her or cross her will in anything.

Still, Milly was not spoiled, though she was very much indulged. She had been taught to *think*, and to reason about things, and to try and find out her faults and strive to correct them, so I think we may call her a very good little girl.

She had one very particular friend, just her own age, the daughter of a neighbouring squire, called Bertie Moore. The two little girls very often played together,

and they used to go together to a neighbouring town for music and dancing lessons.

Bertie was a quiet child, who plodded patiently over her lessons, but did not succeed so well with them as her more clever companion, and consequently Milly was rather the favourite with all her masters and mistresses. This was bad for Milly, for it encouraged pride in her, and she was rather given to be proud naturally.

After her visit to Fairyland, Milly used often to think of the crown of roses, and sometimes she remembered the *yellow* rose, just in time to check her, when she was saying to herself,—‘I don’t think Bertie could have done that exercise as well as I did.’ ‘If I couldn’t play better than her, I wouldn’t learn music at all.’

Now she began instead, to try and help Bertie on with her lessons. She would look out words in the dictionary for her, and try to help her to understand the meaning of what she had to learn. Music was a special difficulty to Bertie, while it was a delight to her companion, and Milly, remembering the yellow rose, very kindly suggested that Bertie should learn a duet with her, thinking that she so might help her friend, whose mother made a great point of her being able to play well.

Another temptation to pride, Milly had in her position as only daughter of a wealthy country gentleman, who took a foremost place among the gentry of the neighbourhood, and often from a baby she had listened to flattering speeches most unwisely addressed to her, by servants and dependants, who told her ‘what a great lady she would be,’ and how it would never do for *her* to associate with Katie Brown, or Matilda Smith, who were daughters of farmers in the village.

Milly’s mother had always been very delicate, and

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unable to look much after her little girl, so when her father was away, she had no one to tell her how wrong and foolish it was, to be proud of high birth, or fine clothes, or good looks, and though she often looked rather longingly at the merry, noisy group of children playing in Mr Brown's garden, or in Mr Smith's orchard, she kept herself aloof from them when they met at school feasts or flower shows, and I fear she deserved the character they gave her when they said, Miss Grey was such a proud young lady.

Now the memory of the yellow rose told her this was all wrong, and since her return from Fairyland, Milly gradually lost the proud look her young face had sometimes worn, and she made a point of trying to speak cordially, to every one she met.

She was quite surprised to find how much pleasure this brought her. Everyone seemed so kind. Farmer Brown offered to cure her pony's foot when it went lame, and Matilda Smith brought her from Devonshire just the very fern she had been wanting so long, to complete her collection.

The people in the village said, 'they couldn't think what was come to Miss Grey, she wasn't a bit high now, and there couldn't be a pleasanter-spoken young lady nowhere.'

How pleased Milly would have been if she had heard what they said, but it seemed to her that the more she tried to overcome her pride, the more proud feelings would come up. Still she tried on, and kept on hoping she might find the yellow rose.

It was about two years after Milly's visit to Fairyland. She had been working very hard at her music, hoping to gain a prize at the end of the year, when it was the custom of her music master to have a

concert at which his pupils played, and the best performer received a prize at his hands.

Milly had been practising one sonata, and Bertie was toiling at another—sorely frightened at the idea of playing in public. All the pupils made quite sure of Milly's success, and in her own mind, she felt pretty sure of it herself, for, at the last rehearsal, she had far surpassed any of the others, and had received the highest commendation from her master. Milly's happiness, however, was damped by her anxiety for her friend. Poor Bertie was so anxious to do well, for her mother thought so much of music, but she found it such hard work, none but such a patient soul as she was would ever have persevered. Milly said all she could to encourage her, but all in vain. She became more and more serious and frightened, as the day approached.

Time went on, and now there were only two days before the much-talked-of concert was to take place. Bertie had arranged to come and have tea with Milly, that they might have a final practice, and talk over the concert. She accordingly walked up early in the afternoon, with a very grave face, and a roll of music in her hand. Milly met her at the door, and pulled her into the school-room, saying,—

'Now, before we begin business, I'm going to give you a good toasting, so come and sit down in the very middle, in front of the fire, while I run away with your hat and jacket.'

Bertie sat down and tried to be as bright as she could, but she still looked so doleful, that Milly began to laugh at her.

'You'll have an attack of "Beethoven on the brain," my dear child, if you take it so much to heart,' she said, cheerily. 'Come, we'll have some tea, and

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then you shall play your sonata, and then I'll play mine.

Bertie only shook her head and sighed, as she said, in anything but a cheerful tone,—

'It's all very well for you, Milly; you play so well, there's no need for you to be afraid,—but I think it will be the death of me,' and as she spoke her blue eyes filled with tears. 'You know I never can do anything when there are people listening, and playing is worse than all. I'd give it up now, only I know mamma would be so vexed. I never was so miserable in all my life. Even when I am asleep, I dream about this horrid concert. Only last night I dreamt that Mr Crotch put me in a corner, before all the room full of people, and put a dunce's cap on my head, because when I sat down to play, I found that I had quite forgotten all my notes, so of course I had to stop.'

'Poor child,' said Milly, kissing her affectionately; 'I wish I could help you. I'd gladly lend you my hands if I could, if you think they would do better than yours.'

'I should think they would indeed,' replied Bertie, smiling through her tears; 'but I don't quite know how we could manage the exchange, and you would come off badly if we did.'

'I don't know that,' said Milly, 'for your drawing is far better than my playing. Now let's get out the music and begin our work, if your fingers are thawed.'

So saying, she opened the piano and unfastened the roll of music Milly had brought. It contained two pieces.

'Why, here's our duet!' she exclaimed, as she saw the contents of the roll. 'Now, Bertie, dear, would you like me to play that with you on Thursday evening, instead of our each playing a solo?'

Bertie's face brightened at once with a look of relief, but she shook her head,—

'No, no, Milly,' she said, 'that wouldn't be at all fair. I couldn't let you sacrifice yourself for me. You know we are only allowed to play one piece each, so if you played the duet, you could not play your sonata, and you would lose your chance of the prize.'

'Never mind,' said Milly. 'The prize would be dearly bought by your fretting yourself into an illness. Of course, I should like to get the prize, I don't deny it; but I shouldn't have a bit of pleasure in it if I felt I had been unkind; so now it is no use your saying another word—you and I will play the duet on Thursday evening, and I will write to Mr Crotch and tell him we intend doing so.'

'Dear Milly, it is very kind and good of you,' said Bertie, her eyes again filling with tears. 'But, indeed, indeed you ought not to do it. I am sure Mr Crotch will be vexed. You will lose the prize, and it will go to Katie Brown instead, as she is far the best player after you, and what will everybody say to the prize being given to a farmer's daughter?'

'Well, we shall see,' said Milly, swallowing down a moment's rebellious feeling which rose in her heart. 'It will be a very good thing for us if Katie gets the prize, for I fear we all snubbed her very much at the last concert, and it will be a very good lesson for us if she beats us. Now, then, come and we will practise hard at the duet, and perform it on Thursday in first-rate style.'

They accordingly sat down to the piano, and Milly positively declined to say another word about the competition for the prize.

Milly and Bertie did not meet again till they met at

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the concert. As soon as Milly entered the room, Bertie came to her, and squeezing her hand, whispered to her,—

‘Oh! Milly, you can’t think how thankful I am to you. I don’t dread it hardly a bit now.’

The concert went on with great success. The first part was occupied by the performances of the younger pupils, it being wisely arranged for them to play first, in order to avoid the ordeal of comparison with the more advanced pupils.

The duet by Milly and Bertie was the first piece in the second part. Bertie trembled a little and played rather feebly at the commencement, but gaining courage as she went on, she conquered her nervousness, and acquitted herself so well, that the duet was considered a great success, and the players were both complimented by their master, and much applauded by the audience.

Katie Brown’s piece followed the duet. She had chosen a sonata of Beethoven’s, and as she had worked very hard at it, and had a great talent for music, and played with much refinement and taste, her performance was pronounced to be really excellent for a girl of her age. Milly was much struck by the modest, quiet way in which she received the applause she had so justly earned, and thought she looked quite pretty, as, with a smile and blush, she acceded to the request of the company that she would play the slow movement again.

At last the concert came to an end, and general excitement prevailed as Mr Crotch brought forward the prizes and called up the successful competitors to receive their rewards. He began his speech with some hesitation, as if he hardly liked to make the announcement,

saying that the result of the competition was not what he expected, but that his most advanced pupil had, in fact, withdrawn from the contest, etc., etc., and finally he stated that the first prize of the evening had fallen to the lot of Miss Katie Brown, though, he added, that he was sure that she herself would feel that if Miss Grey had consented to play a solo, she would, in all probability, have been the successful candidate.

'Oh! that isn't fair,' said Milly to her friend. 'She would have beaten me, I'm sure she would; she played so beautifully—much better than I can.'

And leaving Bertie's side, she crossed the room to where Katie Brown stood blushing among her delighted friends, and shook her heartily by the hand.

'Oh! Katie,' she said, 'how beautifully you played. I am sure you richly deserve your prize. You have far outstripped us all, and we shall have to work hard to keep up with you.'

'Oh! don't say that, Miss Grey,' Katie replied, with almost a distressed air. 'I feel I don't deserve the prize, for it ought to have been yours; and I shall always consider it is a present from you.'

'I wish it was,' said Milly, smiling; 'for I should have had the greatest pleasure in giving it to you.'

The party soon broke up, and Milly went home feeling so glad at the thought of Katie Brown's happy face, that she forgot to regret her own failure, and as she dropped asleep, she said to herself, 'Well, I'm sure I couldn't have done it so well.'

The next morning she was roused from a rather late sleep by a tap at her door, and the maid entered, carrying a plant in a flower-pot in her hand, wrapped up in paper, on which was written,—

'For Miss Grey, with Katie Brown's compliments and

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thanks.' Milly opened the paper, and disclosed to her delighted eyes a rose tree, bearing one perfect blossom, a yellow rose.

'Oh! my rose, my rose!' cried Milly, hardly able to believe her senses; 'it can't be the rose I have been seeking so long.'

'It is,' said a soft voice close at her side.

She looked round, startled at the sound, and beheld a fairy form, one of the guardians of the Rosy Crown, with wings and star and fairy wand, just as Milly had seen her in Fairyland.

She now began to sing, her tiny voice sounding like a little silver bell.

*Humility*, that lovely grace,  
Happy mortal, thou hast found ;  
With my blossoms pure and sweet,  
Shall thy modest brow be crowned.'

The fairy then took the flower, which Milly gathered for her, and vanished out of sight, but immediately another blossom appeared on the plant, so though one was being stored up in Fairyland to form part of her crown, Milly had still the pleasure of looking at and tending, her beautiful yellow rose.





## CHAPTER VI.

### THE PINK ROSE.

**W**HEN Milly was fifteen, her father and mother determined to send her to a school in Normandy, which was well known to them as a very desirable one, as they thought it so bad for her to work at her lessons alone.

To Milly's great delight, it was arranged that Bertie Moore should go to the same school, and Mr Grey undertook to escort both the girls on their long journey.

They both felt the parting from home and mother very much, but their spirits rose as they became more and more interested in all the strange sights which they saw as they left England. The little voyage in the steamer amused them immensely. They were neither of them ill, and were delighted at the novelty of a journey by sea, and they both said they should be sorry when it was over ; but when they landed at Dieppe, and heard the strange language, and saw the funny costumes of the people who crowded the landing-stage, they had no regret for anything, so amused and interested were they in all they saw and heard. A journey by train, and a short ride in a diligence, which they thought the

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strangest carriage they had ever seen, brought them to their destination. With eager eyes they watched the clean white streets and picturesque old houses of the little town, till the diligence stopped at an old carved stone archway, which formed the entrance to the only inn in the place. Here they left the diligence, which went lumbering through the arch into the inn-yard, its bells jingling as the rough-shod horses, in their wooden harness, drew it over the big stones which paved the yard.

Mr Grey and his two companions walked on to the *pension*, which for a time was to be the home of Milly and Bertie. It was a quiet, cool-looking stone building, to which you gained entrance by a small door in a high wall, and the girls thought it resembled a convent, so quiet and still were the long passages through which they passed to the quaint little reception room of Madame, the superintendent of the school. Here they waited some time, admiring the polish of the dark oak floor, and looking from the window at the prim garden, with its straight gravel walks intersecting the closely shorn lawn, with an ivy covered sun-dial in the middle of the grass. They were much pleased with their future instructress, a brisk little French lady, dressed with almost nun-like simplicity, in a plain black gown and little muslin cap, which, however, she wore with all the *natty* grace of her nation, and in which she looked far better than many who make a study of the prevailing fashion.

She received Milly and Bertie with much kindness, and invited Mr Grey to have tea with them before leaving, and then she showed them the huge school-room, partitioned off by curtains into class-rooms, and took them up into the dormitories, where each little white bed was screened off from its neighbour. Milly

always remembered that dormitory as she saw it first on that summer evening, the glow of the setting sun lighting up the pretty view, and the sweet smell of new-mown hay coming in through the open window, while the bells of the neighbouring church were ringing the Angelus in a most musical chime.

Soon Milly and Bertie were quite at home in their new abode ; and they were very happy there, though, of course, they were not without the little trials which we all must meet with wherever we are. They liked Madame de Real extremely, but there was a German governess whom they did not care for. Most of their companions were foreigners, some French, some Swiss, and some German, but there were four English girls besides Milly and Bertie, and these six occupied the same dormitory.

Of the English girls there was only one older than the two friends, and she was a girl of eighteen, by name Hetty Ravensworth. She was a fine, handsome, dark girl, of striking appearance and pleasing manners, the head girl in the school, and a great favourite with her instructresses, and with most of her school-fellows.

Bertie Moore took a great fancy to Hetty immediately, and they soon became fast friends, but Milly never could cordially like her. She often asked herself the reason for her dislike, fearing that it was caused by jealousy of Bertie's devotion to her new friend, but as time went on Milly became more and more convinced that Hetty Ravensworth was not to be trusted.

Milly had an innate love of truth, and was always frank and open in her manner, never caring for the mysteries and secrets school girls so often affect, and she was very sorry to see that gradually a sort of cloud

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seemed to come between her and Bertie. Several times when she came into the room, there would be a sudden silence between Bertie and Hetty, as if the talk which had been going on between them could not be continued in her presence. She tried once or twice to sound Bertie and find out what was going on, as she felt sure, from her altered manner, that she was conscious that she was not doing right. At last Milly even ventured to hint that she feared Hetty Ravensworth was not a truthful girl, and therefore not a desirable friend and confidante.

But Bertie turned off all her friend's remarks, and said she was sure that if Milly would give up such fancies and prejudices against Hetty, she would like her as much as she herself did.

'I never could care for anyone who was untruthful,' Milly often said; 'because I could not care for anyone whom I couldn't trust.'

'You are so dreadfully strict and particular,' Bertie would reply, and turn off the conversation to something else.

Time went on, and one night Milly, who was generally a very sound sleeper, was awakened by a pain in her face, which would not allow her to sleep again. She was too sleepy at first to notice anything about her, but when she was fully roused, she was surprised to see that there was a light in the dormitory. It was always the duty of Fraulein, the German governess, to extinguish the light at a certain hour every evening, and she afterwards passed through the dormitory again to reach her own room, which opened into it at one end.

Milly knew that Fraulein must have gone to her room long before, and the unusual light frightened her at first, as she thought some one must be ill. She got up, and

hastily wrapping herself in her dressing-gown, she left her own little cubicle, and passed down the middle of the room to see where the light was. She went first to see if Bertie was all right, and there to her dismay she found the cause of the illumination.

A wax candle was burning on a chair by Bertie's bed, and seated on the bed were Hetty and Bertie reading books, which were evidently novels, and so deeply absorbed were they in their forbidden amusement, that they did not hear Milly moving about, till she startled them by exclaiming,—

‘Oh! Bertie, dear, how can you do so?’

Bertie jumped up, letting her book fall with a bang on the floor; Hetty, more self-possessed, immediately blew out the candle, and after hurriedly pushing it and the books under Bertie's bed, ran quickly to her own, and was soon pretending to be sound asleep.

Bertie, now quite miserable, burst into tears.

‘Oh! Milly, dear, you won't tell, will you? You will get me into such trouble if you do, and not me only, but Hetty and Fraulein too,’ she whispered, as she clung to Milly.

‘Fraulein!’ said Milly, astonished; ‘what can Fraulein have to do with it?’

‘She has a great deal to do with it, for she gets us the books,’ Bertie replied; ‘so you see there can't be much harm in them. You won't tell, will you? and then I'll tell you all about it to-morrow. I shall be so much happier if I tell you. I have been very unhappy lately.’

‘I know you have, Bertie, and I have been so sorry for you, dear; but you must not ask me not to tell Madame what is going on. I don't want to get anyone into trouble, least of all *you*, but it would be very wrong of

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me to let such mischief go on without speaking of it. It would be as bad as doing it myself.'

Milly then returned to her bed, but sleep had forsaken her. She was far too anxious and unhappy at the thought of all that lay before her, to forget her trouble in sleep.

The next morning Hetty Ravensworth drew her away from the other girls, before school began, to try and persuade her to say nothing about the last night's proceedings, but Milly was quite firm, and no coaxing or threatening took any effect upon her resolution.

'If you will speak to Madame yourself, I will gladly be silent, but she must be told, and if you won't confess the deceit that is going on, it will be my duty to do so,' she said; 'and I shall do it, for the sake of the younger girls. What use is it to give them a good education, if they are learning lessons also in lying and deceit?'

'I shall confess nothing, nor tell of others; you can do as you like,' Hetty replied, turning away from her; 'only I warn you that if you do tell, you will be cut by every girl in the school for a "sneak."'

'Call me what you like; I must do what I know to be right, and brave the consequences,' Milly answered, as she left the room to induce Bertie to go with her to Madame.

Madame proved to be as Milly thought her, both wise and kind. She quietly investigated the conduct of the German governess, and her inquiries brought to light so much that was unsatisfactory, that her dismissal was a matter of course.

Hetty Ravensworth very narrowly escaped expulsion from the school, for it was discovered that she had been in the habit of bribing Fraulein, by means of presents, to procure works for her to read; but she apologised so

humbly, and spoke so plausibly about the whole affair, that Madame relented, and let her stay on.

Poor Bertie was sadly grieved at her share in the sad business. If tears could wash away or atone for faults, then, indeed, hers must have been quite blotted out, but Milly was her fast friend throughout, helping her both by encouragement and pity, till Bertie said one day,—

‘Milly, I do thank you, for you have been a real friend to me, and I trust you have taught me a lesson I shall never forget, of truth and straightforwardness.’

Soon after these events, Milly was sitting by herself, feeling rather lonely and miserable, as she saw the cold looks of the girls, when one of the younger children came into the room, and running up to her, said,—

‘Oh! Milly, look what Madame has sent you, and she hopes you will go and have tea with her this evening.’

So saying, the little one put into her hands a lovely pink rose, perfect in form and colour, whose fragrance almost filled the room. A slip of paper was attached to it, on which was written,—

‘For Milly Grey, with the grateful thanks of Madame.’

The child ran away, and as Milly sat looking at her beautiful rose, she heard again a fairy voice singing softly,—

‘’Tis mine, in the great name of *Truth*,  
A flowery crown to wreath,  
For those whose lips in early youth,  
True words alone will breathe.’

‘You have gained another rose,’ said the little fairy, as she came forward to receive it from Milly. ‘I hope soon the crown of roses will be yours.’



## CHAPTER VII.

### THE RED ROSE.

**A**FTER the departure of Fraulein, the school settled down again into its usual routine, but Milly did not find it the same as at first.

All the girls, except Bertie Moore, were cold to her, and she found their cold looks and unkind words very hard to bear. Sometimes she was sorely tempted to speak angrily in return, as she felt she did not deserve their treatment of her, but she remembered the crown of roses, and said to herself,—

‘If I don’t try very hard, I shall not find the red rose, and then I sha’n’t win my crown: I must try to be *patient*, as well as *true*.’

So she would not make the angry answer which rose to her lips, and even tried not to think an unkind thought of those who behaved so badly to her. But she found it very hard. She had to watch herself so carefully, or an impatient word would slip out almost before she knew it, and sometimes she was quite disheartened, and thought she should never find the red rose.

Bertie said to her one day,—‘If I were you, Milly, I

would have it out with Hetty Ravensworth ; she is the one who leads on all the others to tease you, and I can't think why you put up with it.'

'Oh ! I think it is better to wait patiently till she sees how wrong she is,' Milly replied. 'It takes *two* to make a quarrel, and I am determined I won't be one of them. It would only make me more unhappy to have a quarrel with anyone ; I never did, and, if possible, I never will.'

So she went on quietly with her work, trying hard to get on, and making good progress with all her studies, though she no longer carried so light a heart as she used to do, and so the work seemed harder.

After some time Milly began to feel as if she could not do her lessons ; she had often bad headaches, and her feet felt so heavy somehow, when she walked, she could hardly get up and down stairs. At first she thought it was only because she had been so worried lately, but soon she began to fear she must be going to be ill, and her fears were correct, for soon poor Milly was quite ill, and obliged to give up all her work and stay in bed. She had caught a fever which was then prevalent in the neighbourhood, and the doctor said she had been rendered susceptible to it by the worry and distress of mind she had of late been subject to.

For a few days Milly hardly knew anything that was going on around her, but it proved to be only a mild attack of the fever, and she was soon in a fair way to recovery. It was then that she first began to feel her illness. She was very weak, and unable to amuse herself, and the days did seem so large in that large bare infirmary room. The silent form of the nursing sister gliding about spectre-like, the only living being she had to look at in her dreary solitude. How Milly thought of

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her dear, distant home, and pictured to herself her sunny little school-room, from which she could stroll through the window, on to the terrace, so gay with brilliant flowers. How she longed for the sight of her father and mother, and thirsted for the sound of the dearly loved voices of home.

Then her weakness made her feel cross and irritable, and it seemed a sort of relief to her to speak in a snappish way to the sister who nursed her, but she remembered the red rose she was so anxious to find, and restrained the cross impatient words as often as she could. Of course Mr and Mrs Grey were sent to when Milly was taken ill, but it unfortunately happened that Mrs Grey also was ill at the same time ; and though she begged her husband to leave her and go to Milly, he would not do so, while the accounts of his daughter represented her illness as not serious. But Milly knew her parents had been written to, and she could not help longing that her father at least might come and see her. Every morning she longed for the post to come, and every evening she fretted because she had had no tidings of his coming. It was so hard to be patient. Milly was not allowed to see Bertie or any of the other girls for fear of infection, and the days did seem so long. She often amused herself by thinking over all the wonders she had seen in Fairyland years ago ; and when she thought of the beautiful crown, she found it easier to be patient and to wait.

Milly had been in the infirmary about three weeks. She was fast getting better, but she had often bad, restless nights, which made her weak and ill in the mornings. It happened one night that she had been peculiarly uneasy and restless all the night, but as morning dawned she fell into a sound sleep, which

lasted so long, that the sister who was nursing her began to be anxious, and was almost inclined to wake her; but seeing her sleeping so peacefully, she would not disturb her, and Milly slept on till after eleven o'clock. She woke with a sort of consciousness that something unusual was happening, and as she opened her eyes, she saw the sister go quietly out of the room. She soon returned, bringing Milly's breakfast, and in reply to her invariable question, — 'Is there a letter for me?' she said, smiling.

'I have something better than a letter for you this morning, but you must not be too excited. You have been so good and patient through all your trouble. Now we shall see how wisely you can bear a joyful surprise.'

Milly started up in bed, exclaiming,—

'Oh, do tell me what is it!' But the sister had not time to answer, for the door opened to admit Mr Gray, and Milly was soon clasped in her father's arms.


After the first joyful greetings were over, he took a small box out of his pocket, and gave it to her, saying,—

'Your mother sent you this with her best love. I will leave you to look at it while I see Madame.'

Milly opened the box, and there, covered carefully in cotton wool, she saw a lovely crimson rose.

'It *can't* be the red rose for my crown,' she said to herself, as she gazed admiringly at the velvet petals.

'It *is* your red rose,' said the fairy voice she had so often heard before; 'and well you have earned it, for you have learned to be patient as well as true.' And then she sung, in her sweet, tiny voice, these words,—



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'I will give my blossoms rare  
The patient soul to grace ;  
The richest virtues lose their crown  
Where *Patience* finds no place.'

Her song finished, she took the rose and vanished  
out of Milly's sight.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE WHITE ROSE.

**A**ND now Milly's school-days were over. She and Bertie Moore had taken leave of kind, brisk little Madame, who kissed them affectionately on both cheeks. They also said good-bye to all the girls, who seemed seriously sorry to part with them, for since her illness Milly had become a universal favourite. Even Hetty Ravensworth was won over by her gentleness and patience.

I will not attempt to describe the delight of the journey home, and the meeting with the dear mother, not seen for so long.

You can imagine how Milly rushed about the garden to visit all her favourite haunts, how she crumbled away loaves of bread for her gold-fish, and fed her fowls, till even these hungry birds were tired of eating ; how she made her ponies quite ill with apples, and spent half her pocket money in sweets for the gardener's children.

One of her first visits was paid to her old nurse,—a dear old woman who had lived with the Squire from his boyhood, and who was a perfect storehouse of

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wonderful stories about fairies, elves, sprites and magicians. From her Milly had imbibed her love of fairy lore, and though she was now such a big girl, it was always a delight to her to sit on a low stool, with her head resting against old Nannie's knee, while she listened to some wonderful history; which told of enchanted castles, with all their paraphernalia of dragons, and lions, and wonderful transformations. Old Nannie now lived in a tiny, ivy-covered cottage at the top of a wooded hill, about a mile from Milly's home. It seemed an undesirable situation for the home of so old and infirm a woman, but as Nannie never now went out of doors beyond her tiny garden, she always said the hill was no drawback to her, and she loved the cottage, the scenes of her happy married life, which had been cut so short by her young husband's sudden death.

He was a game-keeper on the estate, and died in consequence of injuries inflicted by poachers, whom he had caught in their unlawful pursuit of game.

Milly was sorry to find her old nurse much aged and altered, she was unable now to move, except from her bed to the chair, in which she sat all day long. Milly was grieved to see her old friend so infirm, and she tried, whenever she could, to spare a few minutes to sit with Nannie and read and sing to her, and so help to pass away the days, which sometimes seemed so long and weary.

Time went on, and the days passed happily enough both for Milly and Bertie after their return home. Mr and Mrs Grey were never tired of devising new pleasures for their only child, and what with riding, driving, and rowing on the lake in her pretty boat, the summer days seemed hardly long enough for all the enjoyment that

occupied them. But in the midst of all her pleasure and gaiety, Milly did not forget her crown. She remembered that she had yet to find the white rose, the most rare and precious of them all, and she sometimes said to herself, 'I don't see how I ever can find my white rose, everybody is so kind and spoils me so, they won't let me deny myself anything.' But yet, by watching very carefully, she found many opportunities of doing a kindness at some cost to herself, though no one knew it. She would lend her favourite songs to Katie Brown, though she did not like to hear her sing them. She would give up a game of lawn tennis, which she so much enjoyed, to sit and talk to old Mrs Holmes, the vicar's mother, who was very deaf and very fond of talking. She would give up riding with her father, which was perhaps her greatest treat, to accompany her mother when she was well enough, to go for a drive; and she tried to be punctual in her attendance at the village school, though it involved a long dusty walk, very trying in such hot weather, and the heat and closeness of the room generally caused her to pay the penalty of a bad headache. Milly and Bertie were both now approaching their sixteenth birthday, the date of Bertie's being the 20th August, and Milly's not till the middle of October. Both the girls had been looking forward with great pleasure and excitement to Bertie's *fête* day, which was to be kept this year with particular honour. There was first to be a treat to the school children, and afterwards a garden party for all the young people of the neighbourhood, to conclude with a dance for those who liked it. Bertie had discussed all the arrangements with her friend, for the same relation was still maintained between the girls as in their more childish days. Bertie was always inclined to be shy and timid, and to lean on the judgment of her more


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strong-minded friend and companion. They had many merry meetings to make all the arrangements for the coming *fête*. And now all was ready, and the only remaining anxiety was about the weather.

The day preceding the birthday was brilliant in its summer brightness. Not a cloud dimmed the clearness of the blue sky overhead. The large tent hired for the occasion stood temptingly on the lawn, its gay pennon undisturbed by even a summer breeze. The adjacent field showed an array of swings, rocking-boats, and various other arrangements for out-door play; and it was with unmixed delight that Bertie took Milly round to inspect every detail of the preparations for the morrow's entertainment.

To Bertie's great joy, Milly pronounced everything to be as perfect as could be desired, and the friends separated with a parting wish, expressed by both, that the morrow might only be such a day in point of weather as that one had been, and they were not disappointed. The morning of the eventful day broke in all the loveliness of summer splendour. No cloud was to be seen, and the only fear expressed was, that it might be oppressively hot in the middle of the day.

Milly woke almost with the first song of the birds, and sprang from her bed to see whether it was really and truly as fine a day as she fancied. One look from her window set her mind at rest on that point, and she returned to her bed and lay looking at the pretty new white gown spread out on her couch, and thinking how much she should enjoy the day, and wishing for her friend all the good things she could think of, as appropriate to a birthday. Sleep was quite impossible, and Milly was glad when it was time for her to get up. She needed no second call, and was soon ready to go



down, but just as she was leaving her room, her mother's maid tapped at her door, and on gaining admission, she put into Milly's hand an open note, saying, as she did so,—‘My mistress sent this for you to read.’

Milly read the note, and found it was from the village doctor, announcing that he had just been summoned to see old Nannie Roberts, Milly's nurse, and had found her in a fit, which had left her still unconscious at the time his note was written. He stated, further, that he thought she might recover her consciousness, but that a permanent cure was well-nigh impossible, though he could not say at present how long she would be likely to live. Poor Milly rushed to her mother's room, and implored with tears to be allowed to go at once to her dear old nurse, but Mrs Grey thought it useless for her to go so far, while her poor old friend was not in a state to recognise her or know of her being there. It was accordingly arranged that Mr Grey should ride over at once to the cottage, and see how the patient was progressing, and he promised Milly faithfully that if Nannie became conscious, he would at once send for her.

The morning wore away. Milly could not rest or occupy herself in any regular work, but spent the time in wandering about the garden and shrubbery, listening for the sound of a horse's feet on the dusty road, and constantly watching from the gate for her father's return, thinking her ears might have played her false, when no step was to be heard.

At last a distant cloud of dust in the road told her that he was at hand, and in answer to her eager questioning on his arrival, he told her that Nannie had returned to consciousness, and knew them all, and that

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her first inquiry and constant desire was for 'Miss Milly, my dear Miss Milly.'


'But how can you go to-day, my dear?' the Squire asked when he had told her this. 'Bertie will be expecting you; in fact, it is time now that we were off to the *fête*.'

'Oh! no, no, papa!' Milly exclaimed, her eyes full of tears. 'I couldn't go. I should be thinking all the time that dear old Nannie was wanting me, and I should be miserable; so please let me go to her at once. You and mamma must go to the *fête*, and send the carriage back for me, and if she is better I can come then.'

After some hesitation the Squire consented to this plan, and Milly set off at once for the cottage. She begged to be allowed to go without waiting for the pony carriage to be got ready, and her father had not the heart to refuse her, seeing how anxious she was. It was now twelve o'clock, and the heat was intense. Milly had a long way to go, on an open road where was no shelter, and at the end of her hot dusty journey, she had to toil up the steep hill on which the nurse's cottage stood.

But she thought not of heat and fatigue, and so anxious was she to reach her old friend, that she traversed the distance in far less time than she usually gave to the journey. Milly thought herself amply rewarded for her promptitude when she reached the bedside of her dear old nurse, and saw the bright look of pleasure and peaceful content, which replaced the look of watchful anxiety she had seen there as she entered.

The old woman lay looking at her as if the happiness of gazing at her was quite sufficient to her, as she murmured every now and then, 'My dear child, my little pet.'



Milly sat down by the bedside and took the wrinkled hand in hers, and by-and-by the whispered words ceased, and the old woman sank into a deep sleep as calm and peaceful as an infant's dreamless slumber.

Milly sat motionless, afraid to move lest she should disturb the rest, which the doctor had said would be the saving of the life she held so dear.

Time went on, and still old Nannie slept, her hand clasped in Milly's. The carriage came, as the Squire had arranged, to fetch her to the *fête*, but she silently motioned to the watchers that it must go away, and she remained silent and motionless as before. The summer day was drawing to a close before Nannie woke, and then she only roused sufficiently to take food, and sank again into the same quiet sleep as before. Milly's hand was free now, and seeing the old woman no longer required her, she moved to the open window, and sat there watching the shadows of the closing day, as they stole among the trees which surrounded the little cottage in the wood.

As she sat there, the intense stillness around her was broken by the chirp of a bird which sounded close to her; a shrill piercing little note repeated again and again as if it were calling to someone. Milly's attention was attracted to it after it had been several times repeated, and, rising from her chair, she leant out of the window to see if the bird was in any trouble. She looked out into the clustering ivy which framed the little window, and as she did so, the fading sunlight shone full on a lovely white rose which peeped from the dark green masses of the ivy like a silver star.

'What a lovely rose,' said Milly to herself, as she looked at it, and then she saw a little bird quite unfamiliar to her eyes, who sat on the ivy by the rose

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and continued to utter the little shrill call she had heard before she looked out of the window.

‘You beautiful rose, I think I must gather you,’ she said at last, reaching out her hand to it.

As she said these words, the bird gave several chirps in a delighted tone, quite different to its former anxious call; and when Milly’s hand touched the rose, it vanished, and in its place stood the fairy she had seen before, who plucked the rose and gave it to her, saying,—

‘Happy child of earth, you have won the white rose; the crown shall be yours;’ and then, in sweetest notes, she sang,—

‘*Charity*, the queen of virtues,  
Lends her gentle grace to thee;  
Kind, unselfish lives and holy,  
Shall rewarded be by me.’





## CHAPTER IX.

### MILLY'S CROWN.

**T**HE fairy vanished, and Milly, worn out with the day's excitement and fatigue, fell asleep, her heart full of grateful joy as she thought of her white rose and of her promised crown. As she slept, a wondrous vision came before her. She was again in Fairyland, in one of the loveliest dells of that all beautiful country, surrounded by richest scenes of wood and water, trees and flowers, distant hills and splashing fountains, canopied overhead by a sky of the clearest, richest blue.

As she stood and gazed entranced, lovely music charmed her ear, music which seemed to hover in the air midway between earth and heaven, and looking up, she saw four wondrous beings, whose outspread wings, glistening in the golden sunlight, bore them ever nearer and nearer to her. They were robed in garments of gleaming white, and in their hands they held a crown of roses, each blossom of which was sparkling with the diamond dew-drops which sprinkled its velvet leaves. As Milly gazed entranced, the forms who bore the chaplet came ever nearer to her, and at last they

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paused, holding the crown above her head, while they sang,—

‘ Happy child, we come to greet thee,  
Joyful news to thee we bring,  
Glory now and peace shall meet thee,  
Thine the victory we sing.  
Humble, patient, kind, and true,  
The flowery crown we give to you.’

As they sang the last words, the air seemed full of fairy forms of wondrous beauty, who all joined with the sweet music of their silvery voices, in the happy chorus,—

‘ Humble, patient, kind, and true,  
The flowery crown we give to you.’

THE END.



## TWO LITTLE MAIDENS.

Two little maidens sitting on the grass,  
Wondering how their playtime they shall pass ;  
One gathered daisies for a daisy chain,  
The other threw them all away again.

Two little maidens rowing in a boat,  
One jumped overboard, thinking she could float ;  
The other saw her friend begin to sink,  
Caught her and pulled her to the river's brink.

Two little maidens riding in a swing,  
Backwards and forwards merrily they sing ;  
Forwards and backwards, how they laugh and shout,  
But one leaned over, so she tumbled out.

Two little maidens going out to tea,  
Both fresh and bright as you could wish to see.  
Two little maidens coming home again,  
Very cross and tired, splashing through the rain.

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Two little maidens fast asleep in bed,  
Very still and quiet lies each curly head ;  
Two guardian angels spread their wings above,  
Keeping them from harm, whisp'ring peace and love.





## ‘THE KETTLE AND THE POT.’

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### CHAPTER I.

‘**T**ELL! I must say I am glad I am not like that nasty ugly black pot,’ said a conceited little chit of a copper kettle, as it flashed the bright sunlight from its shining sides. ‘I declare I’d hide myself in the darkest cupboard I could find, if I wasn’t better worth looking at than that dingy thing.’

‘Never mind, my young friend,’ the despised pot called out from the fire, ‘looks aren’t everything, as you’ll find out one day. Who knows but you may be as ugly as *me* some time, and anyway, I shall last much longer than you.’

‘You conceited old thing,’ the kettle answered saucily, ‘*me* like *you*, indeed! I think I see myself all black and dirty as you are,’ and the little kettle shone and flickered in the firelight, till he looked almost as if he was on fire himself as he spoke.

‘I shouldn’t demean myself by talking to such a little

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upstart, if I were you,' the old kitchen kettle called out from the stove on which she sat drowsily humming to herself, as the water began to warm. 'You think yourself a very fine fellow because you have a shining face,' she continued, addressing her copper friend, 'but what I look at is *use*, and I should like to know what good *you* are to anybody. Who'd care to sit for ever on a shelf, blinking in the firelight? I'd much rather have a black face, and sit comfortably singing on a warm fire. Who ever hears a song from such as you?'

At this attack the little kettle became very angry.

'You stupid old prig,' he called out, 'who asked *your* opinion, I should like to know? I wasn't talking to you; just mind your own business, or you'll boil over, and then there'll be a fine bother in the kitchen. You call *that* singing, do you? If I could'nt sing better than you do,—I'd be sorry to try to do it at all.'

'Will you kindly oblige us by giving us a tune?' the pot chimed in, in an ironical tone, 'and then we shall be better able to judge of your powers; it is a pity such talents should not be displayed.'

The kettle did not deign to reply to this speech, but seemed to toss up his spout with an air of scorn, and remained silent.

The old kettle gave a sort of puffy laugh and called out, as she became quite excited,—

'Yes, come, give us a song, and we won't tease you any more. What's the good of saying you can sing, if nobody ever hears you?'

This was too much for the young kettle.

'I say I *can* sing, and people *have* heard me, you vulgar black idiots,' he burst out angrily; 'but I don't sing in such company as this. How do you suppose I should look as I do, if I were to sit on a kitchen fire and

sing to such people as you? Thank you; I sing to quite a different class!

'Ha! ha! ha!' laughed the old kettle, with a furious hiss and splutter—puffing out such a great column of steam, that it dimmed for an instant the bright face of her conceited young friend; and such a hissing and fuss ensued, that further conversation was impossible, and the cook, summoned by the noise, came in and carried off both the kitchen kettle and the pot, to use their contents elsewhere.

'A good riddance of bad rubbish,' said the copper kettle to himself as they were carried off. 'Now we shall have some peace and quiet in the kitchen, without that wheezy old woman's puffing and row that she calls singing. Fine music that, indeed!'

As our friend could find no one to talk to, and soon got tired of talking to himself, he spent the rest of the day in admiring himself, and in thinking how far superior he was to any of his companions.





## CHAPTER II.

**T**HE next day there was a great stir in the kitchen. There was to be a luncheon party, and nearly all the pots and kettles were high—busy singing, and puffing away on the fire, all except our little copper friend with the shining face, who still stood on his shelf glittering in the bright firelight. Nobody seemed to require his services.

This pleased him at first, for he thought how bright and nice he always looked by the side of his more-useful, but dingy companions. At last, however, he began to feel rather dull. Everybody was far too busy to attend to him, and as he heard his companions all singing together over the fire, he fancied he should rather like to be singing too. He knew well it was no use to try to sing as he sat on the shelf. He was so cold up there that singing was quite out of the question. So he was getting quite sad and sorrowful—when, to his joy, he heard his name mentioned by someone just outside the kitchen door.

‘I say, Mrs Cook,’ someone called out, ‘where’s that there little fancy kettle as missus keeps for the drawing-room—that little copper one?’ The voice belonged to

Montague, the page-boy, who now came into the kitchen and began looking about him. 'Now then, cooky, make haste, for my time's precious,' the young gentleman went on, drawing a chair to the fire and seating himself on it with a foot on each hob.

'I like your impudence,' returned the cook, 'you look after your kettles yourself. I'm afraid you're hurting yourself with too much work, you look like it now. Just you get out of that chair, and take yourself and your kettle out of my kitchen, or I can tell you you'll get what you won't like.'

'I ain't much afraid,' said the boy with a sly look at the cook, who pretended to be very angry indeed, though he could see she wasn't. 'If you'll reach me down that there kettle I'll see if I can't bring you something as you'll take to, after dinner to-night, see if I don't,' said the boy, laughing.

'Well, here's your kettle, and now you take yourself off'

So saying, she took the kettle down from the shelf, and gave it to the page, who carried it to his pantry, and rubbed and polished it till it shone 'like gold,' as he told the housemaid afterwards.

The kettle now felt more proud of himself than ever.

'I wish those dingy old black pots could see me now,' he said to himself as he was carried into the drawing-room. 'The stupid old things never go into polite society, so how should they know anything? I think they'd be rather surprised if they could hear me sing by-and-by. I daresay I'm going to waste my fine voice in singing to an ignorant old creature like that kitchen kettle, who thinks herself such a judge.'

The page carried the little kettle into the drawing-room and set him on the fire, which felt more warm and

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comfortable to him after his long stay on the cold shelf in the kitchen.

‘What a sweet little kettle,’ he heard a young lady say as soon as Montague had left the room, ‘it’s just like a toy. Where did you get it, Mrs Caddy?’ she asked the lady of the house.

‘It was a wedding present, my dear Minnie,’ she replied. ‘An old lady’s-maid of my mother’s sent it to me, because she knew my fancy for boiling a kettle in the room. I never like the tea, unless I boil my own kettle.’

‘Indeed no,’ her friend answered, ‘but then one doesn’t often see such a pretty one. I sha’n’t let Tom rest till he buys me one exactly like it. I call it *lovely*.’

This conversation so delighted our young friend who was the subject of it, that he tilted up his spout a little higher, and twinkled in the firelight till he almost seemed to be dancing.

‘This is the sort of society I like,’ he said to himself, ‘here I feel quite at home. I’ll give them a song soon when I get a little warmer, and then we shall see what they’ll say.’

So after a few preliminary puffs, he began his favourite song—the one which he fancied showed off his voice to the most advantage.

It was a very touching song, all about ‘bubbling fountains’ and ‘murmuring streams,’ but no one seemed to take much notice of it. At this, the kettle became quite impatient.

‘It’s clear these are not musical people,’ he grumbled, ‘and I don’t fancy they have much poetry in their composition. I’ll try what a little fire will do, and see if I can’t rouse them to pay some attention to me.’

So he changed his song for one which told of 'darting flames' and 'fiery caverns,' and got so excited with his theme, that his lid began to bob up and down, and quite a column of blue steam came issuing from his spout.

'The kettle boils at last,' said Mrs Caddy when she saw its excited state; 'now, my dear Minnie, we'll have some tea.'

So saying, she attempted to lift the kettle from the fire, but by this time it had become so furious, what with the heat of the fire, and the excitement of its song, and it hissed and spluttered so much, that the steam spurted out, and slightly scalded the lady's hand.

'Horrid little thing!' she exclaimed, letting it fall into the fender, and spilling some of the water. 'Ring for Montague to come and make the tea, and he must bring a kettle-holder, but I've spilt so much of the water, I'm afraid now we shall have to trust to the kitchen kettle for our tea after all.'

Meanwhile, the little kettle stood in the hearth in a small pool of water, looking rather disconsolate.

'This is what comes of people who have no soul for music,' he said, hissing and puffing away to himself. 'Tea, indeed! They only cared for my singing because of their nasty tea. I'm glad they can't have it after all. I don't want to make their tea for them. I hope though, nobody will tell that old woman in the kitchen about this accident, or won't she laugh at me. She'll give herself more airs than ever if she knows they sent for her because I boiled over in the middle of my best song.'

Just then the page returned with a jug of boiling water, and the ladies proceeded to make their tea. As he was leaving the room, his mistress called out to him,—

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‘Montague, take away that little kettle—it’s no use now ; and just look at that pool of water in the hearth—there’s a mess.’

‘That’s the good of them stupid little shining kettles,’ said Montague, as he put it on the pantry fire. ‘They’re only meant to give folks trouble, and don’t do a bit of good after all.’

‘That’s all he knows about it,’ thought the kettle to himself, for his conceit took a long time to cool.





### CHAPTER III.

**M**ONTAGUE, having hastily put the kettle down on the pantry fire, began looking about him for sundry good things, which he had put away ready for his own tea; and when he had filled a plate with sweet biscuits, various pieces of cake, and some remains of fruit, he carried it off to his friend, the cook.

The unfortunate little kettle, lonely and deserted, soon began to feel very uncomfortable. The fire was very fierce, and the little water that remained in it soon boiled away, and then the heat became most distressing. The poor kettle grew terribly frightened. He hissed and spluttered, and tried to scream, but nobody heard him, or paid any attention to his distress, till at last the cruel fire made a hole quite through his side.

‘Whatever is that a-burning in the pantry?’ Ann, the housemaid, called out, as she passed down the stairs. ‘That boy’s always up to mischief.’

She opened the door, and looking in, saw the miserable little kettle steaming and hissing on the fire.

‘Here’s a pretty kettle of fish,’ she said, taking it off the fire. ‘Whatever *will* missus say now? Here’s

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her best favourite kettle ruined. I believe there's a hole right through it. I hope that saucy boy'll get turned away now, for there's no living in peace with him.'

She carried the kettle off to the kitchen, and there she found the cook and Master Montague, just at the conclusion of their tea. It appeared to have been a very comfortable meal, and Ann fancied something a little stronger than tea had formed a part of it, as both cook and Montague had very red faces, and seemed unusually jovial, 'but it might have been the fire,' as she said afterwards. Ann was rather offended that she had not been invited to share the good things, which cook and Montague had been enjoying, so I am afraid she was pleased to see how horrified the boy looked, when she showed him his mistress's favourite kettle burnt nearly black, and with a hole quite through it.

'Oh! I say, here's a pretty go!' said the young man, jumping up from the table, and taking the kettle from her hand. 'Whatever shall we tell the missus? She'll be in a rare way about it, I know. I'll go and rub the little beast as bright as I can, and she needn't know she didn't burn a hole in it over the drawing-room fire.'

While he was speaking, the poor little kettle ventured to glance timidly towards the fire, fearing that his friends, the pot and the old kitchen kettle, would be laughing at his misfortunes; but to his relief, he found that the pot was not in the kitchen, and though the kettle stood on the hob, she seemed to be asleep, for she took no notice of her young friend, but sat quite still, drowsily puffing out an occasional small cloud of steam, and apparently quite lost to all that was going on around her.

'Stupid old fogey,' said the young kettle to himself, beginning to recover his spirits. 'She might have had a rise out of me now, if she hadn't been too sleepy to see it.'

The old kettle wasn't asleep after all, but she was a kindly old thing, though rather sharp sometimes, and when she heard of the accident that had happened to her comrade, she said to herself,—

'Poor little fellow, I won't make any remark now he's in trouble. He was terribly conceited, but I dare say this'll be a lesson to him. I shall just take no notice, but leave him to himself.'

Montague now departed to his pantry, taking the little kettle with him, and he set to work in real earnest, rubbing and scrubbing with all his might to try and restore it to something of its former brightness; but alas! the lid, the spout, the handle, and a small space in front, were the only remaining spots that would shine. All the rest of the kettle was as black as its friend, the pot.

'Well,' sighed Montague to himself, when he had rubbed till his arms ached, 'I can't do no more, so I shall just put it up on the shelf, and hope as missus won't want it taken down again while I'm here, and if she should, I shall tell her the kettle leaks, and that I think as how it must have been burnt that day as she used it in the drawing-room.'

He accordingly carried it down again to the kitchen, and put it back on its old place on the shelf.

'It don't look so bad after all, as it stands there, do it?' he asked his friend, the cook. 'Mind as you don't let missus see it off the shelf, and if she talks about using it, say as you're afeard it leaks since that day she used it.'


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‘Do you think as I’m going to tell lies to get you out of a scrape, young man? You’ll do that a deal better yourself,’ the cook replied; but something in her face seemed to content the boy, who gave her a very knowing look as he left the kitchen, and betook himself again to his pantry, whistling a popular melody as he went.





#### CHAPTER IV.


HE next morning, the little kettle saw, rather to his dismay, that his old enemy, the pot, was puffing away on the fire, but for some time he appeared too much engrossed in his own affairs, to have time to notice anything else, and our young friend was just beginning to hope he should escape a lecture, which he knew would be a sharp one, when he heard the rasping tones he so much dreaded, calling out to him,—

‘Hullo, my young singing gentleman, so you’ve come back again! I fancy somehow you don’t look quite as bright as you did before you went away. I fear you exerted yourself too much in singing to the fine folks upstairs.’

‘Nasty, cross old thing! I wish he’d boil over, and then he’d stop “jawing,” as Montague calls it,’ the little kettle said to himself, but he could not answer the pot, and pretended he didn’t hear his remarks.

‘Dear me!’ resumed his tormentor, after a bit, ‘I fear you are worse than I thought. You must have lost your voice as well as your complexion.’

‘You needn’t talk about complexion, I’m sure,’ the kettle angrily replied, unable any longer to keep his



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temper. 'Mine's better than yours, anyway, and whatever you may choose to say, I *did* sing in the drawing-room for a long time, too, and that's more than you ever did.'

'That's true,' the pot replied; 'but then, you see, I don't pretend to be musical. I've something else to do than sing, I can tell you; and I fancy, my young friend, from certain whispers I have heard, that it will be some time before *you* sing again, either in the drawing-room or anywhere else.'

'Come, come, my friend,' the kitchen kettle called out, before the little one had time to make the angry reply which he had all ready. 'We old folks mustn't be too hard on the young ones, especially when they're in trouble, like our little friend here. It won't do to hit a fellow when he's down, you know.'

'Not so down as you think,' the little kettle called out, in an angry tone, for his conceit was not to be knocked out of him all at once. 'If I've met with an accident, it wasn't through my own fault; and I can tell you the company upstairs treated me very differently to you black old things down here.'

'I am sorry to hear you speak so,' the old kettle replied. 'It is a bad sign when young people are disrespectful to old ones, especially when the old ones are the best friends they've got. The day may come, young man, when you will think of the "black old things down here," and wish you were with us.'

'Well, never mind, goody. You are a kind old creature, I know, and I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. As for your friend, the pot, I wish he ~~was~~ more like you, but don't think I care for the rude things he chooses to say. I consider myself above it.'

So saying, the kettle tossed his spout with a laugh.

'Ha! ha! ha!' laughed the pot, so loud, that his lid danced up and down, and his contents hissed and spluttered as they splashed on the hot stove.

'Laugh on, my friend,' said the little kettle to himself. 'You're making a pretty mess of it, and here's the cook to take you off, and a good thing too!





## CHAPTER V.

**A** VERY dull time followed the return of the little kettle to its old place. The master and mistress of the house went away for two months, and during their absence, the servants, each in turn took a holiday, and even when they were all at home, there was so much cleaning to do, that very little cooking could be done.

The pot, therefore, very seldom visited the kitchen, and when he did, he was too much offended with the copper kettle to say a word to him, and the old kitchen kettle was very busy always, and was not fond of wasting her time in talking, so the young and idle occupants of the shelves found their life very dull, and, like most young people, got very tired of standing still.

Time went on—the house was very full after the return of its master, and cook, and Ann, and Montague seemed to be running about all day, and hardly found time to sit down to any meal, but in spite of all the bustle that was going on all round him, nobody seemed to want the little kettle, or even to remember that he existed at all.

He didn't approve of being left so much to himself, and soon got very tired of the solitude and silence.

The weather, too, was very bad ; constant fogs and rain made even the kitchen cold and damp, and by-and-by the little kettle began to feel quite poorly. He felt sure that he had caught a bad cold, and if he tried to speak he felt choked, for a sort of mouldy spots came out inside him, and made him hoarse and ill.

'Oh, dear ! oh, dear !' he sighed to himself ; 'everything seems against me now ; I shall never sing again if they don't take me to the fire soon.'

But nobody heeded his sighs, or inquired into the state of his health, and he had begun to fancy himself quite forgotten, when one day, to his great joy, he heard his name mentioned in the kitchen. His mistress was saying to the cook,—

'There are only two people coming to tea to-day ; tell Montague to rub up my little kettle, and let us have it in the drawing-room.'

'Please ma'am,' the cook replied, 'I don't think as how you can use that there little kettle again. I heard Montague say there's a hole right through the bottom of it.'

'Oh, I hope not,' her mistress continued. 'I shall be vexed if it is spoiled. What has Montague been doing to it ?'

'Please, ma'am, Montague said it was burnt that day of the party, when it boiled over in the drawing-room, and that it has leaked ever since.'

'It might have been burned a little, but I don't believe a hole was burnt in it. Take it down, and let me see it,' said the mistress, turning to the shelf where the little kettle sat anxiously waiting to hear his fate.

The cook rather unwillingly complied with her request, and took the kettle down.

'Oh ! dear, dear,' said Mrs Caddy, when she saw it,

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‘what *can* that boy have done to it ; it is entirely spoiled. Will it mend, I wonder ?’

‘No, ma’am, never ; not to be much use,’ the cook replied, ‘it’ll never come bright any more. And if I was you, I should just sell it to one of these ’ere travelling tinkers, for what they’d give for it ; it’s only taking up room here, and it’s getting quite mildewed with the damp ; just look inside, ma’am.’

‘It is indeed. Well, I suppose it had better go ; but I am very grieved about it, as it was a wedding present from a friend. I shall have to part with Montague, for he grows more careless every day. Put it back on the shelf now, cook,’ her mistress said as she left the kitchen, ‘I shall go at once and speak to Montague.’

‘A travelling tinker,’ said the poor little kettle to himself, when he had returned to his own place. ‘Well ! that does not sound very tempting, but I begin to think any change will be better than sticking up here day after day on this cold shelf, till my throat is sore with damp.’





## CHAPTER VI.

**A**NOTHER month went by, and there was still no change in the fortunes of our friend the little kettle. He still sat disconsolate on the shelf, and felt himself growing more mouldy and asthmatic every day, till he began to long for the arrival of the tinker who was to carry him away to a new, and, he hoped, a more pleasant life.

‘Them gipsy people never comes when they’re wanted,’ cook said to Montague one day; ‘if we didn’t want them, they’d be bothering here continual. I shouldn’t wonder if I can get a shilling for that there little kettle when they do come, for it’s a kind of out-of-the-way fancy sort of shape, and they’ll mend it up, and make something of it. I should think the missus ’ll let me have what I can get for it, as I shall have all the bargaining to do.’

‘Oh come, I say, I don’t call that fair,’ said Montague; ‘if it hadn’t been for me you’d never have had it to sell. I ought to go halves for certain.’

‘Well,’ replied his friend, ‘look here, if you’ll rub it up and make it look as tidy as you can, you shall have half what I get for it,—that’s to say, if misses don’t take the money herself.’

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'You needn't give her *all* anyway,' said the boy 'You can charge your commission, as the "commercials" say.'

'I ain't agoing to take in the misses more than I have already,' said the cook. 'I'd half a mind as it was, to tell her the real truth about the way that there kettle were burnt, and I will now, if you don't take care what you're about, young man, so you'd better look out.'

'I ain't much alarmed. You and I are too good friends for that; but I'll take down that there kettle and give it another rub to please you. I fancy I see'd two gipsy girls in the village last evening when I went to the post, so I shouldn't wonder if some of them were round here before long.'

So saying, he took down the kettle, and carried it to the pantry, where he polished with all his might the few parts that remained bright, and made it look as well as its present state admitted. He then perceived the mildew which had attacked the inside, and set to work to clean it as best he could.'

'There, cookie,' he said to himself, when he had finished, 'I can't do more than that, it looks quite smart now. I shouldn't much wonder if she gets eighteenpence for it, and cheap too. Well I'll take good care I get half, for I don't see what she's to have the money for, when I've got all the trouble. I declare my arms ache, that they do,—the stupid little thing isn't worth half the bother.'

'Here, Mrs Cook,' he called out as he returned to the kitchen, 'I've shined your kettle, and now mind you get the money, and if I don't have my share, you'll have no more nice teas out of my pantry cupboard, so we are quits.'

The cook did not deign to reply, but she replaced the kettle on its shelf, saying, as she did so,—

'Now the sooner them tinker people come round the better, for I know that's the last polishing as you'll get out of that idle boy.'





## CHAPTER VII.

**S**HALL I tell your fortunes, my pretty ladies? Let me cross your hand with silver, and I'll tell you all the good luck that's coming to you. Come and I'll tell true now, that will I.'

Cook heard the voice at the kitchen door next day, and running out, found a tall, dark-eyed gipsy woman standing there. She had a little, swarthy, merry-looking baby slung on her back, and a little girl of about ten years, with shaggy black hair falling over her face and neck, nearly hiding her bright black eyes, stood holding her mother's dress, and looking shyly round her, one finger in her mouth. As soon as she saw the cook, the gipsy began again her old greeting, 'Tell your fortune, pretty lady; give the poor gipsy a bit of silver to cross your palm.'

But cook was a practical person, and cut her short saying,—

'I don't want none of your nonsense. I know quite as much about my fortune as you can tell me; keep all that rubbish for them as don't know no better.'

'Well, you needn't be offended,' said the gipsy. 'I saw good luck in your face, and I thought as you'd

like to know it, but I don't want to tell you against your will. Got anything to sell?' she asked in a lower voice; 'rags, bones, skins, old iron—we buy it all, and give a good price too; or have you any waste food, bits of bread, dripping? We buy it all.'

'I don't think as I've got much as I can part with,' said the cook, who did not think it wise to seem too anxious. 'There's a few bones put by, and a rag or two, and I think I might let you have a couple of pounds of dripping, but I don't want that talked about.'

'Not likely we should talk,' said the gipsy, with a knowing twinkle in her black eyes. She quietly produced from among her petticoats a large bag, into which, after a good deal of bargaining, she transferred the various articles brought her by the cook, who also produced a hunch of bread and cheese, and a cup of beer, which she hoped might induce her visitor to give a good price for her purchases. The gipsy was just preparing to go, when the cook detained her, saying,—

'There's one thing more I might part with, though I ain't particular about it, and I sha'n't let it go for nothing neither.'

So saying she went off to the kitchen, and returned with the little kettle.

Here's a fancy sort of a kettle, as our page boy had an accident with, and burnt a hole in it, but it would be easy to mend, and there's a many as would be glad to buy it of me, it's such a pretty shape.

'Well,' said the gipsy, 'what do you want for it? It's dreadfully burnt. I don't think as it would be much use to me. It isn't worth more than a shilling, anyway'

'I ain't a-going to sell it for that money,' said the

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cook in a very decided voice, taking the kettle from the gipsy's hand.

Just then the little girl began pulling her mother's gown, and looking up in her face.

'What is it Nora, child?' the gipsy said, in answer to her pleading look; 'don't you be on with any of your bothers now, when I'm a talking to the lady.

'Do buy that there little kettle for me, mammy,' shyly whispered the little girl; 'b'ain't it a pretty one?'

'There, I'll give you eighteenpence for it; let me have it and be gone,' the mother said, holding out the money to the cook. 'This 'ere child do get her way in most things,' she added, as she turned from the door, the little girl running after her, the kettle hugged in her arms, and her whole face radiant with delight.

'Well,' said the kettle to himself, 'the company mayn't be very aristocratic, but I don't think now I shall be left to die of cold and damp, so I must be thankful, and make the best of my new friends.'





## CHAPTER VIII.

**L**ITTLE Nora insisted on carrying her new treasure about with her all day, as she and her mother plodded about from house to house, and it was quite late in the evening before they arrived, footsore and weary, at the caravan which they called home. This strange vehicle was drawn up close to the hedge, in a lonely road, the horse was tethered to a gate close by, and over the wheels, steps, and door of the caravan, children of all ages and sizes swarmed in such numbers, that it seemed impossible to imagine they could all be housed in so small a space. Several dark-looking men, too, were loitering about with pipes in their mouths; some being stretched on the ground by a camp fire, which was lighted close by, and two or three ragged women seemed to be busy inside the caravan in preparing food for the company.

The little kettle looked round him in astonishment at the scene so new and strange to him, as little Nora made her way quickly up to the tallest of the gipsies by the fire, and pulling at his sleeve, called out to him,—

‘See, daddy, see here what I’ve got. ‘Bain’t this a pretty kettle? You’ll mend it for me, won’t you, and

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then I can boil it like mother does? Do mend it, won't you?'

'Here, give me the kettle, child, and let me see,' the gipsy answered, taking it from her, and looking carefully into it. 'If you'll put it along with them other pots, I'll see if I can't mend it, next place as we stop at, and then you can boil it if you will. You might sell that there little kettle for a couple of shillings, and buy yourself some shoes.'

'So I will, father; sha'n't I be glad, my feet is that sore—I can't run a bit now—with walking all day on them hard stones.'

So saying, Nora went off to the caravan, and stooping under it, put the little kettle as gently as she could, into a sort of bag which hung underneath, for the reception of the rags, bones, and old iron, which the gipsies collected in their wanderings. The kettle did not at all approve of its new quarters.

'Bah!' he said to himself, '~~what~~ a horrid, dingy hole. I shall be stifled here, and the smell is enough to poison one. Oh! dear, dear, how unfortunate I am now, I seem to be always having fresh troubles. If only that vicious old pot could see me now, how he would laugh. The old kettle ~~was~~ right after all; for what wouldn't I give now to be back again on my own shelf, where I had always a good fire to look at, and better society than these disgusting rags and bones. Well, if ever I get safe out of this, and come across that old kettle again, I think it would only be fair to tell her how true her words came after all. I used to be so pleased with my bright face, and now that's gone, and my sweet voice, and I fear that's gone too, and I did always hate low society, and now I'm come to the lowest of the low. Well, maybe I was

too proud when I had so many good things, and they say pride will have a fall. Certainly I’ve fallen low enough. Shall I ever get up again, I wonder? If I do, I don’t think I shall ever feel very proud of myself again, after being in this horrid place.’

Poor little kettle, he had more troubles yet to endure. As soon as morning dawned the next day, the gipsies broke up their camp, and the scraggy old horse being harnessed to the caravan, it began to move slowly along the road, groaning and creaking under its heavy load. Then how the poor kettle did get shaken and knocked about. The bones and the old pieces of iron came banging up against him at every jolt of the vehicle, till he thought he should be battered all to pieces. If it had not been for the rags, whom he so much despised, he must have been sadly injured; but they collected round him, and warded off some of the blows, which his rougher companions would have inflicted on him.

‘Well, I sha’n’t even dare to look down on *old rags* again, since they have done me this good turn,’ he said to himself; ‘there’s no knowing *who* may come to be a friend in times of need.’





## CHAPTER IX.

**T**HE longest lane must have a turning ; to the darkest night a dawn must come ; and after a period of shaking and jolting which seemed a lifetime, the caravan came to a standstill, and the kettle, to his great joy, learned from the bustle which went on round him, that a halt was to be made which might last for some time. Greater still was his joy when, later in the day, his friend Nora came and rescued him from his uncomfortable quarters, and brought him once more into the fresh air and bright daylight. For the moment he felt so happy that his troubles were all forgotten, and if singing had been possible, he would have sung for very joy and gladness of heart. He was not left long to his own meditations. A strong rough hand seized him and carried him to a sort of impromptu forge which was set up in the camp. Here he had to endure a good deal in the way of doctoring to cure his wound. It was finally stopped up with some boiling metal, but as he loved great heat, he did not mind it, and only thought how thankful he should be if he were ever well enough to sit on a fire again, and

sing his dear old songs. ‘Will he make me shine again?’ he asked himself anxiously, but that hope was soon taken from him.

‘Here’s your kettle, little one,’ the gipsy called out to Nora, ‘it won’t leak now, but I think as how it’ll sell better if I paint it quite black all over, it won’t look so kind of *patchy* then.’

‘Well, daddy, do paint it,’ cried the delighted child, ‘but leave the pretty bright handle, that’ll shine and look beautiful.’

‘Very well, little one,’ he answered, taking a brush out of a pot of black paint at his side, and in five minutes our little friend was as black all over as his old friend the pot, only his shining copper handle remaining to him of his former brilliancy.

‘I shall never call the pot *black* again,’ he said to himself, as he looked ruefully at the black paint. ‘I wonder if my voice is gone too, if not, I shall console myself with that. How glad I am that the old pot isn’t here to laugh at me!’

The sun soon dried his new coat, and when evening came, Nora fetched him, and with the greatest interest and importance, set to work to place three sticks in the ground as she saw her mother do, and hang up the kettle from the top of them. She then gathered some sticks and straw, and soon made a little fire under, and having filled her kettle, sat down on the ground to watch for its boiling,

Oh! the joy and comfort of the kettle now. The warm fire soothed and cheered his very heart, the water soon began to simmer, and he found himself humming over the tune of some of his old songs. ‘Hurrah!’ he said to himself, ‘my voice is all right, so I don’t care about my black face. Here goes!’ and he burst forth

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into his favourite song, and 'puffed out the steam as he used to do in days gone by.

'See! mother, mother,' called out little Nora, as she danced about on her bare feet, 'my little kettle's just a-going to boil, he's a-singing quite loud; do give me my little teapot, and let me make some tea.'





## CHAPTER X.

**T**HE little kettle saw no more of the rags and bones. He never again visited their dreary abode under the caravan. He was now promoted to a place inside, and hung contentedly on a hook among other vessels of a like kind, so he did not complain of his present lot, but whenever he found himself wishing for anything he had not got, he thought of the miseries he had gone through, and this made him quite cheerful and happy. His life now was by no means a dull one. A constant racket seemed to go on all day in the caravan, and nearly all night too; women chattering, cooking, and driving the children about; children screaming, shouting, and pulling about everything they could reach; men calling and shouting, and alas! often swearing, at the top of their loud, rough voices, made a hubbub sometimes quite deafening.

Little Nora never forgot her new treasure; she washed and polished it constantly, and often begged to be allowed to boil it again, but the caravan now continued to move every day, as the gipsies were hurrying on to reach a town at some distance, where a fair was shortly to be held.

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'Shall I sell my kettle at the fair?' Nora asked her mother one day.

'I don't know as you'll sell it at the fair, but when we come to the town, we'll carry it round, and maybe somebody will buy it of you.'

The kettle heard this conversation with a thrill of pleasure.

'Surely no more gipsies will buy me,' he thought to himself; 'and I must say I am tired of this caravan life. How I should enjoy being in a quiet kitchen again after all this screaming and row night and day.'

But they jogged slowly along the road, on and on till he almost began to despair of any change in his noisy life. The days were so like each other, that there was nothing to mark the flight of time, but by-and-by the welcome sound of the wheels passing over paved streets greeted the ears of the travellers, and the town was reached at last.

Nora's impatience would not allow her mother to wait before they started on their begging expedition, taking the little kettle with them. They trudged about from street to street, and from alley to alley, but no one seemed inclined to buy a kettle. Nora became quite tired and disheartened at last.

'I sha'n't have no boots, mother,' she said, wearily, as they turned down another narrow street. 'Nobody won't buy my kettle.'

As she spoke they knocked at the area door of a shabby-looking house, a lodging-house inhabited by clerks and apprentices, employed in the neighbourhood. The gipsy's call was answered by a dingy-looking little ragged servant girl, evidently the only domestic the house possessed.

'Missus don't give away nothing, nor yet sell nothing,' the girl answered in reply to the gipsy's appeal, and

she seemed about to shut the door in the face of her visitors.

'Don't you want to buy a little kettle?' said Nora, shyly, hardly venturing to come forward and hold out her kettle.

'My! it's a pretty little thing,' the girl said, looking kindly at Nora; 'mother would like to have that just to make her a cup of tea; now she's all alone she don't want the big kettle.'

'Do buy it, miss,' said little Nora still more earnestly, looking up beseechingly with her big black eyes.

'What's it yours, little one?' the servant girl asked kindly, pitying the poor child, who she thought looked cold and hungry. 'What do you want for it?'

'There, you shall have it for two shillings, and cheap as dirt,' the gipsy said. 'The child wants a pair of shoes that bad, her poor feet are blistered all over. Do buy it, miss.'


The little servant's heart was touched.

'Here's the money,' she said, holding it out. 'I can't well spare it, but I'd like to buy something for mother, 'gainst I go home to see her at Mildmas. There, little one,' she added, taking the kettle. 'I'll take good care of the kettle, and mind you buy some shoes.'





## CHAPTER XI.

ELL, this is certainly better than the caravan,' the kettle said to himself, as he entered the lodging-house kitchen; 'but it's a nasty dingy little hole. I wonder what cook or Montague would say to such a kitchen as this. Why, they were always complaining of their own nice, bright kitchen. I suppose they wouldn't look into a dark, miserable, little place like this. Well, there's no knowing what they may come to, like *me*. I never thought to sit down contentedly in such quarters, but I've come to be thankful even for this.'

Very pleased though, he was, when the next day he heard a conversation between the little servant girl and a friend from next door.

'My, ain't I glad,' said Betty, 'I'm a-going home next week, I do want to see mother. I told the missus as I couldn't stop, the work was so hard, and no time to put in a stitch in my clothes, or even to get a bit of food sometimes; but then, missus did beg me to stay, and, poor thing, she do seem so put about. I hadn't the heart to leave her, though she is a bit sharp sometimes, and she told me if I'd stay, she'd let me go home for a whole week—and won't mother be pleased? I've got a present for her too—look here!' she said, taking the kettle down and showing it to her friend.

'Well, that be a pretty kettle,' the friend exclaimed when she saw it. 'I declare it makes one long for a cup of tea to look at it, but that's what we poor girls never seem to have time for, except when we goes home, not for a quiet cup like.'

'I hope I shall be a-boiling this 'ere kettle, and drinking a cup of tea along with mother by this time next week,' Betty answered, her face looking quite bright through the dust and dirt which smeared it. 'Mother wants some comfort, she do,' the girl continued; 'that good-for-nothing brother of mine gives her a sight of trouble.'

'What's he at now?' her friend asked.

'Oh, he got into a very good place as page boy, but I hear now he's a-going to leave. He's been up to some mischief again, and his missus says she can't put up with him no longer. I've no patience with him—I haven't; giving himself such airs, and never a sixpence to spare for his poor mother. He was that grand, his own name wasn't good enough for him.'

'Bless the boy! What name could he find better?' the visitor asked.

'Oh, if you please, he must go a-calling hisself "Osborne Montague,"' Betty answered; 'but I think myself, as "John Huggins" do sound more respectable; and he needn't despise his name, which is the same as his father's as is dead and gone—but there, I always find as them as is so high, is sure to be brought low.'

'She's quite right,' said the little kettle, who had been much interested in Montague's history. 'So this dingy little servant is a sister of that very fine young man, and she's much the best of the two, if I'm not much mistaken, for all his grand airs!'



## CHAPTER XII.

**E**ARLY the following week, our little kettle found himself journeying along, tied up in a red handkerchief, in company with Betty's Sunday gown, comfortably slung on her arm. It seemed to him a very long journey, as she had some miles to walk, to reach her mother's cottage out in the country, but it came to an end at last.

The kettle heard a very loving greeting pass between the mother and her daughter, and soon the bundle was untied, and Betty brought him out, and gave him to her mother.

'Well now, Betty,' the old woman said, tears coming into her eyes, 'that was real good of you to think on me and buy me that pretty little kettle. I shall think of you every cup of tea as I drink. You have been a good daughter to me, and no mistake, but I don't like as you should spend no more money on me; you give me half your wages last time as you had it too, but I ha'n't a-spent it, Betty, and I don't intend to neither, please God; as we don't have a doctor's bill to pay this year, I've a-put it away for you—every shilling of it.'

'I sha'n't touch it, mother, I shouldn't half work if I didn't think as I was getting a few shillings together for you, and I'm real glad as you like the kettle. I'll run

up and take off my bonnet, and then we'll see what sort of tea it'll make. I'll fill it, and you can set it to boil while I'm upstairs.'

'So do, my child,' the mother replied.

'Now, won't I sing for them?' the little kettle said to himself. 'If I can't make myself happy in this clean bright little house, I shall deserve to go back to the rags and bones.'

So he settled himself down comfortably on the bright little fire, and soon began his most melodious song.

'Now, don't that sound cosy and comfortable, mother?' said Betty when she came down, seating herself on a low stool at her mother's feet. 'I always think when one is tired and hungry, there's no music like a kettle's song.'

So you see the little kettle was appreciated at last.

THE END.



## THE TEA-PARTY.

WEETIE and Popsie asked friends to tea ;  
You might see them standing,  
Happy and smart as they can be,  
On the nursery landing.

Weetie in velvet, and Popsie in white,  
Watch their guests arriving,  
With dresses gay, and faces bright,  
Through the garden driving,

Dickie, and Tommy, and Harry, and Ned,  
Up the stairs came trooping,  
No longer rough and noisy boys,  
Hushed are their shouts and whooping.

So quiet, they've hardly a word to say,  
When they reach the landing,  
Where, clad in all their bright array,  
Their little hosts were standing.

Janie, and Bessie, and Kate come next,  
In dress so gay and blooming ;  
They're peeping in the mirrors too,  
To see if it's becoming.

Popsie and Weetie feel rather shy,  
But nursie soon appearing,  
They call their friends to come away  
And see if tea's preparing.

The nursery had a festive look,  
Quite gay with wreaths and roses,  
Red ribbons decked the rocking-horse,  
And Dolly's smart with posies.

But all look at the table now ;  
No wonder it's enticing,  
For in the middle stands a cake  
All white with sugar icing.

They soon are seated the table round,  
With bright and happy faces,  
'As good as gold,' till Tommy Jones  
Begins to make grimaces.

Dickie, and Harry, and Ned all laughed,  
But nurse's face looked graver,  
'It's spoiled the party quite,' said she,  
'This naughty boy's behaviour.'

When Tommy saw that nurse was vexed,  
He ceased his noise and chatter,  
And all went on quite well again,  
Between the cup and platter.

But Tommy was a luckless boy,  
And getting into trouble,  
Flying away about the place,  
Just like a big soap bubble.

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Janie was sitting by his side,  
Tom thought that she was surly ;  
He knew she much admired her hair,  
Which was both long and curly.

So while poor Janie was eating cake,  
Which on her plate was lying,  
That naughty boy, her golden locks  
To her chair's back was tying.

When grace was said, the children rose,  
Just fancy how appalling,  
Poor Janie screamed, and tumbled down,  
Her chair upon her falling.

The children all were frightened too,  
And Popsie cried for sorrow ;  
But Weetie said, ' You naughty boy,  
I'll tell papa to-morrow.'

Then they played till the time grew late,  
And Popsie grew quite weary ;  
Then there were buns and milk arranged,  
As if by some good fairy.

The children kissed and said ' Good-night,'  
With voices loud and hearty ;  
And Weetie and Popsie thought they'd had  
A very nice tea-party.





## TEDDY'S NEW BOOTS.

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### CHAPTER I.

**C**H! mother, just look here; whatever shall I do?' said Teddy Dale, bursting into the little cottage which was his mother's house, and knocking over a footstool and a bucket in his haste. 'Here's Mr Clark's been and told us boys he'll take us all over to Wavebury to-morrow to play on the sands,' the boy continued eagerly. 'And look at my boots. However can I go in such things as these?' and poor Teddy held up for his mother's inspection a boot in which a wide aperture allowed a considerable space of grey stocking to be seen.

'They be in a bad way certainly,' said Mrs Dale, looking up from her ironing. 'And I don't know where you're going to look for new ones,' she added rather sadly, as she took up her iron and resumed her work. 'You know, Teddy, I can't afford to buy new boots just now, with rent-day coming on, but maybe if you asked him, Mr Tanner would put a patch in that boot to-night, so as you could wear it to-morrow to go with Mr Clark. Look here, you just run round to him now, and tell him, if


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he'll be so good as to mend your boot, I'll wash a few things for him in return, if you'll bring them back. I know as he likes the way I do his shirts, and Mrs Tanner, she isn't much hand with an iron, even if she'd time to give to it, with all them babies.'

'All right, mother,' said Teddy, jumping up with a very joyful face, but he had hardly reached the door when he turned back again. 'I say, mother,' he said, 'perhaps I'd better give up going. If you haven't got the money to pay for mending my boot, I don't see as you should work for it, and you up every night so late as it is, to make up the rest.'

'Oh, never mind that, my boy,' Mrs Dale replied, without looking off her work. 'You know as I don't mind a little extra work, and I'll gladly do a few bits of things for Mrs Tanner, so as you can go for the treat; but you must tell Mr Tanner as I can't pay no other way, for I'm short with my rent as it is, and I don't spend a penny more than I'm obliged. I've always been ready to pay to the day ever since your poor father died, and I'd be downright miserable if I couldn't go to Mrs Morris on quarter day with the rent in my hand, same as I have always done.'

'Well, it's very good of you, and I'll run at once and ask him,' said Teddy, catching up his cap, and running off as fast as his slipshod feet would allow him. As he ran, the thought would keep on coming into his mind of his mother doing extra work for him, in addition to all her own hard labour. 'I don't like it, somehow,' he said to himself; 'it don't seem right, and if I didn't think as it would vex her, I'd give up the treat; but that wouldn't please her, I know, so I'll ask Mr Tanner this time. Seems to me I ought to be working for her, not she for me, and she ill like she is sometimes.'



A short run down one little village street, and halfway up another, brought Teddy to Mr Tanner's house. It was a small cottage with a kind of shed attached to it, in which he worked at his trade, morning, noon, and night.

Here Teddy found him, with his apron on, and his sleeves tucked up, working away at a boot which he held between his knees, and so absorbed in his occupation, that he did not look up when Teddy stopped at the open door, and the boy was almost afraid to interrupt him.

Mr Tanner was considered in the village to be a somewhat 'hard' man. He had a rather severe expression of face, very piercing dark eyes, with heavy black eyebrows and a stern mouth. He was a man of few words, no gossip, as were many of his calling; very just in all his dealings, but not disposed to give much credit. 'I owe no man,' and 'No man shall owe me,' was a very favourite saying of his, but though he seemed severe, and many people were rather afraid of him, Teddy always remembered how kind he had been to his poor father in his dying illness, and how he had paid back to Mrs Dale the price of the last pair of boots her husband had bought of him, saying he should like to give her a little help with the funeral. So Teddy plucked up courage to knock boldly at the door, and to enter and state his errand to Mr Tanner, though he did it in fear and trembling. When he had finished, Mr Tanner gave him one piercing look from under his shaggy eyebrows, but went on working for a minute in silence.

'Your mother wants me to mend those boots this evening, do she?' he said at last, laying down his tools, and stooping down to look at Teddy's unfortunate boot. 'Well, that's a good evening's work, and no mistake,' he said, when he had carefully inspected the wound, 'and

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it's work almost thrown away, for it'll be all out again in a day or two ; those boots be past mending, my boy, except with a new pair.'

Teddy looked very grave as he answered,—

'Very well, sir, then I'll tell mother, but I must wear those boots, however bad they be, for I can't have no new ones yet for ever so long; and, please sir, mother said that she couldn't afford to pay for mending these, but that if you'd be so good as to do them, she'd do a bit of washing for Mrs Tanner, if you'd let her pay in work instead of money.'

'Well, well, my lad, I'll see what I can do,' the shoemaker replied. 'You take your boots off, and I'll lend you an old pair of shoes to run home in, and tell your mother I sha'n't charge her for such a job, and that she's welcome to it, and I don't want to send her no more work to do when she's too much already.'

'Please, sir, I mustn't leave the boots without I take the washing ; it would hurt mother if I did. Thank you all the same, but she'd feel as if she was in debt, and she'd never rest till she'd paid for the work.'

'That's like your mother, and I honour her for it ; I only hope you'll take after her, for you've got a good mother, my boy, and that's the best of blessings,' said Mr Tanner, patting Teddy on the back. 'You can go and ask Mrs Tanner to give you a couple of shirts for your mother to get up for me, if she will do it ; but tell her I'd never have asked her to do it. You're getting a big boy now, Teddy, and if I was you, I'd be thinking if I couldn't pick up a little here and there to help that good mother. I was earning a shilling a-week when I was your age, but of course you are compelled to keep to school a year or two longer, which I wasn't ; still you're a sharp lad, and if you was to look about you, I think you

might earn a little after school hours, and every little helps, you know. Think of what I say.'

'I will, sir, and thank you,' said Teddy, as he left the shed and proceeded to the cottage door to see Mrs Tanner.

Mrs Tanner was a great contrast to her husband. She was now a pale, thin, faded woman, who hardly bore any trace of the prettiness which people said had first attracted to her the regard of Jacob Tanner. She had a large family and poor health, and Teddy could not help thinking to himself, as he sat down in her comfortless, untidy room, 'Well, if my mother is poor, she do manage to be comfortable, and she don't keep such a home as this.' But Teddy forgot the difficulty there is in being tidy, where little feet and little fingers are always busily employed in making the litter peculiar to their age and circumstances.

Poor Mrs Tanner was only too glad to accept Mrs Dale's offer to wash her husband's shirts, as she said, 'She'd no time to do them no fashion, and he be so hard to please.' So she gladly laid her baby in the cradle, and proceeded to rummage among the bundle of dirty linen, which occupied a corner of her tiny back kitchen, till she found the shirts, which she soon wrapped up, and Teddy, taking the parcel in his hand, was quickly on his way home again, to tell his good news to his mother.





## CHAPTER II.

**T**HE next morning dawned as bright and fresh as holiday makers could desire. The sun shone with the rich glow it always sheds on September days, and the birds sang as if they knew that their time for singing was short, and that ere long cold winds would blow away the leafy shelter of their woodland homes, and the abundant food which the rich soil yielded to them would be hidden from them by a chill mantle of concealing snow. Teddy woke with their early song, and he could hardly wait in bed till it was time for him to rise, so impatient was he for the delightful day to begin.

Early as he was, his mother was before him, for he found her preparing their morning meal, her little kitchen neat and trim with a clean hearth and a cheerful fire, though her pale face and the dark rings round her eyes told of many night-hours spent over her folding and ironing, which should have been given to the rest she so much needed. When he looked at her, he remembered Mr Tanner's words spoken to him the day before, and he longed for the time to come when he could work for her. 'I wonder what I could do to earn a little?' he said to himself, as he fetched in some wood and a



bucket of water from the well, and carefully performed the little duties which were his daily task before breakfast.

When the simple meal of porridge and bread was ready, Teddy fetched his father's big Bible, and looked out the lessons for the day, which he always read with his mother before they began their breakfast. However busy the day, Mrs Dale always found time for their reading, for she said she looked upon the daily lessons appointed by the Church as a 'Message from her God to her, to help her through the day, and she couldn't get rightly through it without the Word of the Lord to guide her.' She used to tell Teddy about her old father, who would always open his Bible night and morning, and before beginning to read, would clasp his hands and say, 'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.'

As soon as he had finished his breakfast, Teddy ran off for his boots, which he found as neatly and carefully mended as their worn-out condition would allow of. He did not forget to thank Mr Tanner for so kindly acceding to his request, and received in return a kindly word or two from the grave shoemaker, who remarked to his wife, as Teddy ran off, 'That boy will make his way in the world, if he falls into good hands; he's a fine lad, and a good one, and he's got a good mother, which is the best safeguard a man can have.'

Teddy was not long in getting home, and he set to work at once to polish the old boots, till they shone their brightest, and to brush his Sunday clothes and cap, and to rub his face with soap and towel, till it rivalled the shine of his boots; then, after a hasty mid-day meal of bread and cheese, he said goodbye to his mother, and started off to join the other boys at the house of Mr Clark, the curate of the parish, who was going to take them out for the day's pleasuring at the sea-side.

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They had a merry drive in a large waggon, with Mr Clark and the schoolmaster, beguiling the way with songs and glees, or in listening to wonderful stories told them by Mr Clark.

The nine miles' drive took them some time, as the heavy waggon could not proceed very fast, but none of them found the time too long, it passed so merrily by. Arrived at Wavebury, they were soon dispersed about the beach and cliffs, having promised Mr Clark to listen for the sound of a whistle which was to summon them all to tea on the sands.

Teddy was seized upon by Tom Raven, a bigger boy than himself, the son of the other shoemaker in Ashton, the village where Teddy lived, who proposed that they should climb a steep path up the cliff to the top, and then run down an easier slope on the other side. Teddy agreed, as he had not made any other plan for his amusement, but he wished the proposal had come from some other boy, as his mother did not care for him to make a companion of Tom Raven, who was a rough boy not very well brought up.

He and Teddy started at once on their climbing expedition, as they feared lest they should not get back in time for tea. Teddy found it rather difficult work to reach the top of the cliff by the path Tom had chosen; it was not only very steep, but it was composed of loose stones, which did not afford a firm footing, but were apt to turn over when trodden on, to the imminent risk of sprained ankles to the passengers who attempted to climb that path. However, Teddy was a brave boy for his age, and would not be easily overcome by difficulties, so he scrambled on, sometimes on his hands and knees, till he was quite out of breath, and obliged to sit down flushed and panting, for a few moments' rest.

'I think we've done that well,' said Tom, as he amused himself by picking up small bits of stones, and flinging them down the path by which they had ascended; 'but we've got the worst bit on ahead, so we mustn't stop. Come on, Ted, and don't sit there blowing like a steam engine.'

'All right,' said Teddy, jumping up immediately, for fear his companion should think him wanting in pluck.

This time he led the way, Tom Raven following, and they were getting quickly on towards their destination when Teddy, who had unknowingly trodden on the edge of a sharp stone, felt a sort of crack in his boot, and on looking at it, saw with dismay that the stone had cut his boot, and not only was the old wound reopened, but it was extended almost from the toe to the heel.

For a minute Teddy felt much inclined to cry, for he was only ten years old, and he knew how sorry his poor hard-worked mother would be at his misfortune, but happily he controlled his feelings, remembering in time who was his companion, and how surely he would be teased and laughed at in school for many a day, if he shed tears for such a cause. He could not help, however, looking very grave and sad as he sat, when Tom came up, on a fragment of rock, nursing the unfortunate foot on the other knee.

'Why, what's up now, young 'un?' Tom called out when he came in sight of him. 'You haven't been and sprained your ankle, have you, like I did here last year?'

'No, I haven't hurt myself,' Teddy replied, in anything but cheerful accents; 'but look what I've done to my boot.'

As he held up his foot to be inspected, Tom burst out laughing as he said,—

'If it's only your boot and not you that's hurt, what's the odds? I wouldn't look that miserable about an old

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boot that was worn out afore you broke it to-day. I wouldn't wear such boots, they bain't aspectable.'

'But they're all I've got,' Teddy replied ruefully, 'and I've just had them mended, and mother will be so vexed,' and again as he spoke, the tears were perilously near Teddy's eyes.

'Well! I shouldn't care if I was you,' Tom said, as he began to resume his upward journey, which was almost ended. 'You'll be sure to have a new pair of boots now, which will be far better than those rotten old things.'

'Indeed, I sha'n't,' Teddy answered, as he scrambled after his companion. 'Mother said as I couldn't have any new ones till after Christmas, as she'll have hard work to make up her rent as it is, and she'll have no money to spare for boots.'

'Well, why don't she get a pair on trust, and pay for them a little at a time,' Tom asked. 'My father lets lots of boots go that way; some of the folks pay once a week, some by the month, and so on.'

'Oh! mother would never do that,' Teddy quickly replied. 'She won't get into debt for nobody, and I'm sure I'd go barefooted before I'd asked her to do what she thinks is wrong.'

'She may do as she likes for all me, and so may you,' said Tom, beginning to whistle a tune as he hurried on; 'but you won't get on very fast with that fine boot of yours, so I'll just run on, and tell them you're coming some time this side of Christmas.'

So saying, Tom resumed his whistling, and ran on as fast as the rugged state of the path would allow.

Teddy did not attempt to overtake him. For some minutes he sat still on the ledge of rock, to which he had betaken himself when the accident to the boot

occurred, and tried to think of some remedy for his misfortune. As he pondered, there came into his mind Mr Tanner's words, about beginning to earn something.

'I wonder could I anyhow earn the price of a pair of boots?' he said to himself, but his heart sank when he remembered that his last pair of boots cost *six shillings*; 'and Mr Tanner said the next pair would be quite sixpence more,' he said aloud, as he rose and wearily plodded on, his spirits quite depressed and all his pleasure gone, for he was tired, and the rough stones hurt his foot, now that the boot no longer protected it from them.

When, however, he reached the rest of the party, he felt more cheered, for he had made up his mind to make a friend of Mr Tanner, and ask his advice as to the best way of earning a little money.

'One comfort is, mother won't scold like some mothers would; she'll find a way for me somehow, I know she will,' he thought to himself, as he sat down to the pleasant meal provided for them on the sands. Though some of the boys laughed at his broken boot, he wouldn't be teased by their chaff; but in spite of his trouble, he managed to make as good a tea, and get as much enjoyment at the sight of the sea, the ships, and the cliff-bound beach, as the most prosperous member of the party.





### CHAPTER III.



YOU may be sure Mrs Dale was very sorry to see the state of Teddy's boot when he returned from his excursion, but she would not say very much to him about it, as he was already so grieved, and she knew it wasn't any carelessness of his own which had caused the misfortune.

She was glad to hear that it was not by his own choice that he was in the company of Tom Raven, for he was a boy from whom Teddy 'wouldn't learn no good.'

She couldn't say at once what should be done about the injured boot, but she promised to consult Mr Tanner about it herself, and, in the meantime, she said he should wear hers, though he protested that he never would do that, knowing well that she would then have to go about in old slippers, which would afford quite insufficient protection to her feet.

So Teddy went to bed content, though very tired, after his day's pleasure, and soon forgot all his troubles in the happy dreamless sleep of childhood.

After he was gone, his mother took up his boots which he had left at the foot of the little staircase, and began carefully to examine their condition. She put them down presently, with a sigh, as she saw the extent of the

injury, and then taking her iron from the fire, she worked busily on far into the hours of the night.

As she worked, she thought much about Teddy and his boots, and counted up her scanty earnings again and again, to see if it could anyhow be possible to make them cover the expense of a pair of boots, as well as the quarter's rent.

But it was in vain.

'Nobody can make one shilling do the work of two,' she said aloud, as she folded up the last garment she had ironed before going to bed. 'I don't know what's to be done, but we won't get into debt for them anyway. That would be doing evil that good may come, as my poor husband used to say. I'll try anyhow and see whether I can't mend these boots some fashion, and if I can't, I must give him mine, and go without till after the quarter.'

So saying, she lit another candle, and though her fire had now burnt out, and the room was cold with the chill night air always brings, she set to work to mend the boot.

She was tired, too, and stiff with her long day's work ; but what are cold and weariness to a mother who is working for her only child ? She worked on, and soon her deft fingers had repaired the boot, if somewhat roughly yet effectually for a time, though 'it couldn't last long,' as she said to herself, when at last she laid her work aside and went to her bed.

The first light of the early dawn was beginning to break on the horizon when she laid her tired head on her pillow, but when in the morning she showed Teddy the boot, well patched and mended, she did not tell him that her rest that night had been limited to only two short hours.

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You may be sure he was very pleased, and he went off to school quite bright and happy, but as he went he kept on wondering to himself how he could possibly manage to earn money enough to buy himself a pair of boots. The more he thought of it, the more impossible it seemed to be, for Ashton was a very quiet country village, inhabited almost entirely by poor people and small farmers, who would not be able to give him employment. The rector was old and very infirm, and his wife was so delicate, that she was seldom able to go about at all; and the curate, Mr Clark, was a bachelor, and lodged in the schoolmaster's house, so there did not seem to be much opening for a boy of his age.

He made up his mind, however, to go and see Mr Tanner, after school, and ask him for some advice, and so impatient was he to be off, as soon as this idea took possession of his mind, that he hurried over his sums, and did them wrong, and so was obliged to stay in school to get them right, after the other boys had gone.

'Tisn't often you're idle, Teddy,' Mr Brooks the schoolmaster said to him. 'I'm afraid you are thinking too much about all you saw and did yesterday, but that won't do. Holidays ought to make boys more industrious, or else they mustn't have holidays.'

Teddy looked up at his master, and was just on the point of confiding in him and telling him of his anxiety to find some work, but Mr Brooks, not suspecting any deeper cause for his pre-occupation than a little fit of unusual illness, had turned away and was busy making up the school register, so Teddy did not like to interrupt him, but setting to work in earnest, soon found out the mistakes in his sum, and easily set it right, then taking his cap from its nail he wished his master 'Good afternoon,'

and was off down the road as fast as his legs could carry him, only stopping when he reached his own door.

'Do you want me for a few minutes?' he asked his mother, just putting his head inside the door. 'If you don't, I want to go a little way, but I'll be back in a quarter of an hour.'

'No, I don't want you till this linen is ready to carry to the rectory,' his mother replied.

She seldom asked him where he was going, for she knew she could trust him to keep out of mischief; but she always required that he should come straight home from school, and speak to her first, before starting off on any business, or pleasure expedition of his own.

Almost before she had finished speaking, he ran away, and was soon knocking eagerly at the door of Mr Tanner's workshop.





#### CHAPTER IV.

‘**W**ELL, Teddy, and what do you want to-day?’ said Mr Tanner, when he saw who his visitor was. ‘How are the boots now?’

‘Well, sir, they’d be in a very bad way, indeed, only mother mended them again last night. I broke them terrible bad yesterday at Wavebury climbing up them cliffs; but it wasn’t about the boots I came now, sir,’ said Teddy, looking rather shy, and doubting what more to say.

Mr Tanner did not help him much; he was a silent man, and some people thought him very difficult to talk to. When Teddy stopped, he only said ‘Well!’ without looking up from his work.

But Teddy would not be dismayed, so he squeezed his cap very tightly in his two hands, and said in a very quiet voice,—

‘Please, sir, you said something to me the other day about earning a little to help mother.’

‘So I did, and so I do think you ought to,’ Mr Tanner answered in his sharp, stern way. ‘I was earning nearly my own living before I was as old as you are now.’

‘Yes, sir, I know; and please, sir, I came to-day

to ask you if you'll be so kind as to tell me what you think I could do to earn a little after school-hours, or on half-holidays. I've got all my Saturdays, if I only knew what I could get to do.'

'There, it's out now,' thought Teddy, as he finished speaking, and waited anxiously for Mr Tanner's reply.

The cobbler stopped in his work for a minute, and fixed his sharp, piercing, black eyes on Teddy, as if he would fain look through him, and penetrate to the very thoughts of his heart, keeping silence while he did so ; then taking up his tools again, he said quietly,—

'I believe you're a good lad, Ted, and really want to help your poor mother, and I wish I could help you ; but I can't tell you of anything just now. If you look about you're sure to hear of something soon, and meantime I'll bear you in mind.'

Teddy's face fell rather when he heard this reply. He had so fully made up his mind that Mr Tanner would be able to solve his difficulties for him, and at once suggest some immediate employment, that he felt quite disheartened when he found his hopes not realised. Children always want to begin at once to embark on any new project, and it seems to lose half its attraction in their young eyes if they have to wait for it.

Mr Tanner's sharp eyes detected the downcast look which overshadowed Teddy's face, as he picked up his cap, and turned to go, and his kind heart sympathised with the boyish pang of disappointment. He rose from his bench, and laid his hand on Teddy's shoulder.

'Look here, my boy,' he said in a tone of almost fatherly kindness. 'You want to begin work at once, don't you?'

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‘I do indeed, sir,’ Teddy replied, heartily. ‘I did so want to surprise mother.’

‘Well, now look here,’ Mr Tanner continued, ‘I’m only a poor man, you know, Teddy, and I can’t afford to pay for help, however much I want it; but while you’re looking out for work, would you like to come and do some for me on Saturdays. But, now mind,’ he added, checking Teddy as he tried to speak, ‘I can’t afford to give you more than twopence a-week, perhaps you won’t consider that worth having. I shall want you from nine o’clock in the morning till six in the evening, and should require you to carry home all my work that was finished, and to sweep and clean up my workshop, and make all tidy for Sunday. You know I always finish off in good time on a Saturday. I like to have time to look to my own boots and the children’s, and to settle up my business, so as to have my thoughts free on Sundays to think of other things, so you will have plenty of time to clear up here and get back to help your mother a bit before night time. But now remember I require good work and perfect obedience, and if I find them in you, I may be able by-and-by to help you to a situation which will pay better. Now, run off and tell your mother what I say, and mind you are here by nine o’clock next Saturday.’

Teddy only waited to say,—‘Thank you, sir; mother will be pleased.’

And he was soon running merrily down the street, his breast so light and free from care, he would hardly keep from singing, as he ran, from joy.





## CHAPTER V.



PROUD and happy boy was Teddy when he had finished his work on the following Saturday evening, and received from his master the precious pennies which formed his first earnings.

‘Go on as you have begun, my boy,’ Mr Tanner said, as he put the twopence into Teddy’s hand. ‘I see your mother has taught you how to work, and that is one of the best things she could do for you.’

‘It’ll take me a long time to earn enough to pay for a pair of boots,’ Teddy said, timidly, as he took the money.

‘Not so long as you fancy now,’ Mr Tanner replied ; ‘time soon passes, and you can’t tell that you mayn’t find some way of earning a little more now you’ve once begun. Take care of all you earn, and you’ll be quite surprised to see how soon it mounts up. You know the proverb, “Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves.” When you have earned five shillings, I promise to make you a pair of good boots, such as I should sell for six and sixpence, and you shall give me the remainder of the money as you can, that is, if you continue to be a good, industrious lad, and do your work well.’

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'Thank you, sir, I'll do my best,' said Teddy, touching his cap. 'Won't I soon get a jolly pair of boots?' he thought to himself, as he ran off to his own home. 'I only hope I sha'n't have to go barefooted meanwhile, for these boots be in a bad way, and no mistake. There mother, there's my first wages,' he said, throwing the two pennies down on the table, which Mrs Dale had laid for their tea, as he entered the cottage.'

'Don't that money feel sweet, Ted?' she said, as she picked up the coins and looked almost lovingly at them.

'I can well remember the first money as I earned; that was when I was only seven years old, and I got a penny from our next-door neighbour for carrying home a small basket of starched things she'd been getting up for the rector's lady. I worked for her regular after that, and as soon as I was big enough, I used to carry out her baby for her, and so I went on always earning a little more, till I went to be under nurse at the rectory, and there you know I lived till I married your poor father, who went to live at the rectory as errand boy, and to help in the garden, on the very same day as I went into the nursery, and when we married, Teddy, we'd got nearly thirty pounds in the Savings Bank between us, and wages weren't near so high in those days. So there's a lesson for you, my boy, and I'll give you the little money box my grandmother gave me to put my first wages in. I always used it all the time I was in service, and opened it once a-year to put my savings into the bank.'

'Thank you, mother,' Teddy replied, as he sat down to his tea. 'I like to have the box, but I must take the money out when I've got five shillings, and then Mr Tanner will make me a pair of boots.'

'That's very good of him, for I know he don't sell no boots your size under six or seven shillings, and his boots are real good ones, you don't get no slop work from him. It'll help you on a bit to feel every week that you're that much nearer to getting the boots ; but you'd better put the money into the box at once, for fear you lose it.'

So saying Mrs Dale rose from the table, and shaking the crumbs from her apron into the hearth, she proceeded to unlock a corner cupboard which contained her greatest treasures—the set of tea things which were a wedding present from her old master, and the six silver teaspoons which she had inherited from her grandmother, and a few other relics of the kind, and from it she took a little common wooden money box of old-fashioned shape, and somewhat the worse for long use, which she put into Teddy's hand.

'I don't want to put these pennies in,' he said, as he took it from her. 'I've a fancy to keep them in my pocket till I've got six, and then I'll change them for silver. It won't be long first, a fortnight will soon be gone.'

'They'd be safer in the box than in your pocket,' his mother replied, as she carefully shut and locked her precious cupboard. 'Money burns holes in school-boys' pockets, you know, and you'll be sure to lose them.'

'Not I,' said Teddy, shaking his head, as he put the money back into his pocket ; 'I want my boots too bad to forget. Now give me the rectory linen basket and I'll carry it up at once, before I fetch in the sticks and clean the yard.'

Mrs Dale set to work at once to pack the baskets with the piles of linen she had taken from the fire before tea,

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and which now lay neatly sorted on a side table which was kept clean on purpose for it. She said no more about the money box, for she wisely felt that experience is the best teacher, and that it would be best for Teddy to gain it for himself, even if he paid rather dearly for it.





## CHAPTER VI.

‘**T**HE fortnight soon slipped away, and the third Saturday evening of Teddy’s arrangement with Mr Tanner came to an end, bringing with it the happy moment at which he was to be paid for his day’s work.

‘Could you kindly give me a sixpence for my coppers?’ Teddy asked of Mr Tanner when he handed him his wages, fishing in his pocket for the four pennies he already had there.

Mr Tanner smiled as he took out his old leather purse and searched in it for the required coin.

‘I’m afraid I haven’t got a sixpence,’ he said, after he had searched among his few pieces of silver, ‘but I daresay your mother will be able to change it for you ; or if you run on to the end of the street, to Mrs Baker’s, she’d be sure to have one, and she wouldn’t mind taking your pence for it.’

Teddy thought he should much prefer taking the sixpence home with him in the form of silver, so instead of going straight home, he went on to the little general shop at the far end of the village street, kept by Mrs Baker, who was an old friend of his mother’s, and a very kind good-natured woman.

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He did not notice till he had got quite into the shop, that Tom Raven and a friend of his, who bore an equally wild character, were standing by the counter.

When Teddy saw them, he repented of his intention to change his halfpence for silver, as he felt sure that Tom and his companion would make game of him in some way, and Teddy hated to be laughed at. He hoped old Mrs Baker might be too busy to attend to him, and that he could slip out of the shop again without being noticed ; but the old lady was too sharp for him. She was very busy pouring out some treacle into a jar, which Tom had brought, but she looked up as Teddy entered and hailed him at once.

‘Well, Teddy, my boy, I haven’t seen you for a long time. How’s your mother? Is she better than she was a bit ago? What can I do for you?’ she added, without waiting for an answer to her former question.

Teddy came up to the counter where she stood, and told his errand as softly as he could, hoping that the other boys might not hear what he said ; but old Mrs Baker was rather deaf, and could not make out his request, so, after the fashion of most deaf people, she shouted out to Teddy, in her loudest tones,—

‘Speak up, boy, I can’t hear what you say. Sure, you needn’t be ashamed of your errand, whatever it is.’

Mrs Baker’s loud voice made both the other boys look round and quit their occupation of eating nuts and pelting Mrs Baker’s cat with the shells, while they waited for the treacle and sundry other purchases which Tom had made. Teddy was now obliged to repeat his request in clear and distinct tones ; and no sooner had he stated the purpose of his visit to the shop, than Tom Raven burst into a loud, rough laugh.

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'Can I accommodate you with the change for a five-pound note?' he asked of poor Teddy, in a mocking voice. 'Would you like it in gold or silver?'

'There, stop your nonsense, and don't tease the child,' Mrs Baker said, handing the silver sixpence to Teddy, and saying kindly,—'Now, run home and give the money to your mother, and mind you don't lose it. Money goes much quicker than it comes, remember that.'

While the old lady was speaking, Teddy saw with delight that the other boys had left the shop. So he hoped he should escape any further intercourse with them. He squeezed his precious sixpence tight in his hand, thrusting it deep into his pocket for greater safety, and then started off to run home as fast as his legs would carry him; but he had not gone far when he encountered Tom Raven and his friend, who suddenly emerged from an alley leading out of the street, stopping Teddy so suddenly in his rapid career, that he almost fell into their arms.

Teddy's heart sank for a moment, as he felt sure he would have to undergo some teasing at their hands, if nothing worse; but he was a brave boy, and he made up his mind at once that it would never do to show any sign of fear. He was, however, quite surprised when Tom spoke to him in the most friendly way—apologising for running up against him, and saying he hoped he had not hurt him. The friendliness of this greeting set Teddy's mind at rest and quieted all his fears, and when Tom took hold of his arm, saying,—

'We are going your way; we may as well walk together,' he was quite ready to agree to the proposal, and walked on happily enough between the other two boys.

Teddy thought he had never liked Tom Raven so much before. He generally used to fancy the big boy

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despised and laughed at him, and prided himself on his own better circumstances, but to-day it all was changed, and Tom seemed desirous only to impress Teddy with the idea that he had no better friend than himself. They walked on all together till they reached the top of the little bye street in which Dale lived. Here Teddy stopped, and was turning away from his companions, when they called him back.

‘You may as well come on with us for a bit,’ Tom said, taking hold of his arm. ‘We are only going to see the Squire’s new horses. They came to Ashton this afternoon, and the men are going to take them on to the Hall this evening. There’s ten of them—such beauties.’

Teddy hesitated; a little voice within him told him that his duty called him home, that his mother wanted him, and would wonder why he did not come, and that she would not approve of the company in which he now was; but then again came up the fear of being laughed at, always a sad trial to him, and also he rather coveted the sort of distinction which the companionship of such a big boy conferred on him; and then there were the horses, and he loved horses, and was sorely tempted by the prospect of seeing the new hunters. And so the little voice obtained no hearing, and Teddy linked his arm in Tom’s, and turned away from the path which led to his duty and his home, to follow one which lay in quite an opposite direction.

A few minutes’ walk brought them to the front of the one village inn, in whose stables the Squire’s stud of hunters were resting and refreshing themselves before resuming their journey. The boys stood about for some little time among the little knot of grooms and stablemen who were congregated before the door of the ‘White Star,’ but as the horses did not appear, they

began to be tired of waiting, and to look about for some means of passing away the spare time.

'I vote we turn into Mrs Brown's, and have a bun,' said Tom Raven, after a short consultation in whispers with his friend, Jim Bates, and pointing to a small confectioner's shop over the way. 'I'm awfully hungry, aren't you, Ted?'

'Yes, I'm hungry, and no mistake, for I've had no tea,' Ted answered; 'but I can't afford to spend any money on buns.'

'Oh, nonsense! never you mind about the money,' Tom replied, catching hold of Teddy's arm, and almost dragging him across the street and into the little shop 'We'll have some buns, and Jim and I'll manage about the paying.'

Teddy felt very uncomfortable, but he did not dare to refuse, and the idea of sweet buns was by no means an unpleasant one to his hungry soul, so he walked up to the counter with the other boys.

Mrs Brown was not in the shop, but their entrance had caused the little bell to ring, and they heard her footsteps descending the stairs into the shop, as quickly as her age and weight would allow.

'Just ask her for six buns, will you, Ted?' said Tom. 'I want Jim to come with me for a minute, we'll be back before that fat old woman can get them out for us.'

Mrs Brown appeared just as Tom and Jim left the shop. Teddy asked her for the buns, which she brought on a plate, and as the sight of them increased Teddy's hunger, he began at once to eat one, without waiting for his companions. He had hardly time to take a second bite before the boys returned. They each took two buns off the plate, and handed the remaining one to

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Teddy, then, while they devoured them, Jim drew him to another part of the shop to look at some oddly-shaped sweetmeats in a glass case, while Tom remained leaning against the counter, and talking to Mrs Brown while he ate. Teddy was glad to sit down on a chair which stood at the end of the shop, to which Jim had brought him ; for he was tired with his day's work, and the walk which he had taken after it. He was glad therefore to remain where he was, when Jim left him, and sauntered back to join Tom. Teddy sat still eating his bun, and was beginning to feel almost sleepy in the dim light, when a bang of the shop-door, which set the little bell ringing violently, startled him, and on looking up he found the other boys had gone, and he was alone. He took up his cap, and having wished Mrs Brown good evening, was just going out to look for them, when she called him back, saying,—

‘You’ve forgotten the money, my little man, there’s sixpence to pay.’

‘Sixpence!’ repeated Teddy looking aghast. ‘Why Tom told me he and Jim were going to pay for the buns.’

‘You must have made a mistake,’ Mrs Brown replied rather sharply, for she was a peppery old lady. ‘Tom Raven told me himself that you had got the money and were going to pay for all, and I can tell you, young man, I mean to have my money ; and if you haven’t got it, I shall have it from your mother.’

Poor Teddy was far too frightened to make any further resistance. He drew out his precious sixpence and handed it to Mrs Brown, saying as his eyes filled with tears he could not restrain, ‘It’s my own money, I earned it, and I never meant to spend it in buns. Tom knew I didn’t ; now he’s played me this trick.’

‘Then you should keep better company,’ said Mrs

Brown rather shortly, as she dropped the sixpence into a little slit in the counter, and Teddy felt sure by the expression of her face that she did not believe what he had said, but suspected him of an intention to pocket money which had been confided to his care to pay for the refreshments they had taken.

He felt that it was useless to say more, and his heart was almost too heavy for words. He went out of the shop, and looked round for the other boys, with a faint hope that they were waiting for him to repay him the money, and had only intended to give him a temporary fright, but they were nowhere to be seen; and as he realised the truth of his loss, and looked at his shabby old boots, which he had been working to replace, he burst into unrestrainable tears, and ran down a dark alley close by, where he could sit down on a doorstep, out of sight of anybody, and cry out his trouble alone.





## CHAPTER VII.

**T**HE church clock striking eight roused Teddy from his pre-occupation. 'Whatever will mother do? She will be so frightened,' he said aloud as he got up, and turned out of the dark alley in which he had found refuge, to take his homeward way. He no longer ran merrily down the street whistling some favourite tune, or even bursting into little snatches of song for joy of heart, as was his wont; but now his legs felt so heavy, he could hardly get along, and for the first time in his short life, he dreaded arriving at home, for he knew how vexed his mother would be, at his having gone out with boys of whom she disapproved, and against whose ways she had often given her son a warning.

'She won't be hard upon me, that's one comfort,' he said to himself, as he reached his cottage door. 'She isn't one of that sort, but all the more, I can't bear to to grieve her.'

Teddy found his mother hard at work tidying up her house ready for Sunday. She was beginning to be very nervous at not seeing him back, but she had comforted herself with the idea that Mr Tanner had detained him past his usual hour and had given him his tea.

She was startled by his look when he came in. His eyes were red and swollen, and his whole manner seemed so dejected and changed from his usual bright and cheery way, that she feared something very bad must have befallen him. He felt as if he could hardly tell his story without again bursting into tears, but he feared to grieve his mother more, so he gulped them down with a great effort, and told her his adventure as simply as he could. His mother listened kindly, as she always did, and tried to comfort him for the loss of his earnings, but she said not a word of blame, for she knew he had had a lesson which he would not easily forget, and that experience would teach him better than she would.

Teddy went to bed somewhat comforted, but still rather sad; and when he said his prayers before he lay down, he felt as if the words he had so often said had a new meaning to-night, which he had never realised before, when he said,—‘Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.’

When he was gone, Mrs Dale fetched his boots to see whether it was possible for her in any way to patch them up to last a little longer; but they were past being improved much, even by her skilful fingers. ‘Poor boy, he’ll have to work three weeks longer now before he gets his new ones,’ she said, with a sigh, as she put them away, ‘unless maybe he gets a present at Christmas time.’

The next morning Teddy was still rather grave, but he did not mention his lost sixpence. It was Sunday morning, and he had to be quick with his morning’s work, and get dressed in time for the Sunday school. He had also to say his Collect and Gospel to his mother before he started, as she liked to know that he had learned them perfectly. Mrs Dale went to church by herself, for Teddy sang in the choir, and as she was coming out, she

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met her old friend Mrs Brewer, the housekeeper at the rectory, who had been one of the upper servants there when Mrs Dale first went out to service as nurserymaid. Mrs Brewer was Teddy's godmother, and took much interest in him ; though like most old ladies who have had no children of their own, she did not quite understand the ways of boys.

She now joined Mrs Dale in her homeward walk, and as she inquired particularly for Teddy, Mrs Dale told her of his trouble about his lost earnings. Mrs Brewer listened with much interest to the story, and when it was over, she said she should give Teddy a lecture for associating with such boys as Tom Raven and his friend Jim.

'I *did* think Teddy knew better than to go with such boys as them, and it's a good thing he got into trouble through them, for then he won't do it again,' she said rather severely ; but as she spoke she was fumbling in her pocket, and presently drew out her purse, from which she produced a sixpence, and handed it to Mrs Dale, saying kindly,—'There, one can't expect to find old heads on young shoulders ; so give that to Teddy for me, only don't give it for a week or two, till he's learnt his lesson. I don't think he'll lose this money in such a silly way.'

'Indeed no, ma'am,' said Mrs Dale, as she took the money.

She placed it carefully in her purse, and walked quickly home, smiling to herself as she went, at the thought of the happy surprise which awaited Teddy, and longing to tell him of it without further delay, though she quite agreed with Mrs Brewer that the delay would be good for him.

The following Saturday, when Teddy returned from Mr Tanner's in the evening, he brought his twopence at once to his mother, and asked her to give him the little money box she had offered him before.

I see now, mother, that you were right before. If I'd only kept my money in this box, I should have had it all,' he said when she brought it.

He put his money in, when, much to his surprise, he heard it rattle against some other coin inside.

'Why, there's money in here now. Whoever put that in?' he asked his mother, eagerly.

She did not answer, but took a small key from her purse, and, unlocking the money box, she showed Teddy the sixpence his godmother had sent him. Teddy's delight may be imagined. He jumped and capered about the cottage, and made such a noise, that his mother threatened to return the sixpence to Mrs Brewer, if it had the effect of making him so obstreperous. Master Teddy immediately quieted down, but he was none the less happy for showing his pleasure in a less excited manner.





## CHAPTER VIII.

**F**OR many weeks after these events, Teddy continued steadily at his work, both in school and for Mr Tanner, and by degrees the little money box became so heavy that there seemed to be a prospect of the purchase of the new boots almost immediately. This happy prospect had been rendered more near by a few little presents which the boy had received, a Christmas box from the Squire, consisting of a new shilling, and a sixpence from the vicar as a New Year's gift. He had also had a threepenny-piece from the village doctor, as a reward for a service rendered to him one day when he was visiting a patient who lived next door to Mr Tanner's house. The horse had been tied to the little gate in front of the house, but his master being delayed longer than he approved, he fidgetted till he loosened the rein, and at last succeeded in setting himself free, and was just starting off at a quick trot down the street, when Teddy, hearing the rattle of his hoofs, ran out from the little shed where he was working, and opportunely caught the loose rein and led the horse quietly back to his former position.

In the meantime, the old boots had become more and more dilapidated, and Teddy was beginning to think he would soon have to go barefoot, when, happily for him,



one evening as he was carrying home the clean linen to the rectory, just as he was passing the gardener's cottage at the entrance of the grounds, as he was walking on the gravel, a small pebble got into a hole in his boot, and cut his foot, causing him so much pain for the moment, that he called out, and almost fell. The sound he made reached the ears of the gardener, who came out to see what was the matter. He found Teddy sitting on the grass taking off his stockings, which were stained with blood from the cut on his toe.

The hurt proved to be a very slight one,<sup>9</sup> but the gardener took him into his house, and while his wife plaistered up the wounded toe, he went away into an inner room, and soon returned with a pair of boots in his hand about the right size for Teddy, and in far better order than his own, though by no means new or smart. These he handed to the boy, saying kindly,—

‘There, my lad, you may have these boots instead of those old ones of yours. They belonged to my Johnnie, and I’ve kept them ever since he ran away to sea five years ago. I did say I’d never part with them, as they’ve always stood where he left them, along with his rod and his school bag, but you do want some so bad, it seems selfish like to keep these standing idle, and your good mother’s son with his feet on the stones.’

Teddy thankfully accepted the kind gift, and had worn Johnnie Stewart’s boots ever since, but now they too were getting very shabby, and Teddy was daily counting up his earnings, and calculating how soon he should be able to take Mr Tanner the sum of five shillings, and have his new boots made according to promise. The time slipped away much quicker than Teddy had expected, and both he and his mother were surprised when, early in the New Year, they opened the precious money box, and found

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that it contained already four shillings and tenpence, and that therefore the wages due on the following Saturday would bring the sum to the required amount. Teddy could talk of nothing else that evening, and his mother was almost tired of answering questions as to how long the boots would take to do, how soon they would be begun, what sort of leather they would be made of, and many more, till at last she set him to read aloud to her in order to put an end to his innumerable questions.





## CHAPTER IX.

**ON** the following Saturday, when Teddy went to Mr Tanner's house, Mrs Tanner met him with the news that her husband had been suddenly called away from home by the death of a brother who lived in London, but she added that she expected him to return in a few days at the longest, as he was so particularly busy at this time.

'But he's not forgotten your wages,' she said, showing Teddy a little packet wrapped in a bit of newspaper. 'He's a wonder, he is, for remembering everything, and he gave me all his orders just as if he weren't coming back no more.'

Teddy's face brightened at the sight of the packet containing his wages, though he could not help feeling a little disappointed at the delay which Mr Tanner's unexpected absence would make in the commencement of the long-talked-of new boots. He consoled himself, however, with the thought that, though there might be a little delay, there could now be no uncertainty as to the making of his boots, for the money was ready to be given at once to Mr Tanner, as stipulated, and when once the work was begun, Teddy knew he should not have to wait long for its completion; so he worked away all day

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with a good will and a light heart, and as he ran home in the evening, he found himself whistling and singing almost unconsciously, as had always been his habit when things were going well with him.

When he reached his own door, he was rather surprised to find it locked, and the house in darkness—but he said to himself,—

‘I suppose mother’s gone with the linen herself, as I’m rather late. The fire must have burnt low, or I should see the light through the crack in the shutters.’

His first thought was to make up the fire before his mother’s return, so he ran into the next house where she was in the habit of leaving the key when she was away. He soon lit up the fire, and put on the kettle, and then as Mrs Dale did not appear, he laid the table for tea, taking special pains to make it look as inviting as he could, for he knew when she came in tired, she said, the sight of a comfortably prepared meal refreshed her even before she tasted it. When Teddy had laid the tea, he looked up at the clock, and was startled to see how late it was.

‘I never knew her so late before,’ he said to himself. ‘I wonder now whether she’s awaiting for me to fetch her, as it’s dark, and the roads so slippery with the frost.’

The thought had no sooner struck him, than he seized his cap, and ran off as fast as his legs would carry him, only waiting to leave the key of the cottage in its usual place, lest his mother should return by a different road, and find herself unable to enter her dwelling.

It was a long and hilly walk to the rectory, which was also the manor house, the rector being parson and squire too, though Mr Talbot of the Grange, in the next parish, was familiarly known as ‘The Squire’ in all the neighbourhood of Ashton. There was, however, a much

shorter road to the rectory through some fields, and Teddy took this one, feeling now quite sure that he should find his mother waiting for him. He knew she would not attempt the field-walk in the dark, and alone. He ran so fast, that he was almost breathless when he reached the servants' entrance. The kitchen-maid opened the door, and was startled to see who was waiting there.

'Why, Teddy Dale,' she said, as she held up her candle to see his face, 'whatever brings you up here so late?'

'I've come for mother. I thought she wouldn't like walking home so late,' Teddy replied, feeling frightened, he didn't know why.

'Your mother! why she's been gone two hours and more. I saw her going down by the gardener's lodge, carrying her empty basket, as I came in from the dairy before six o'clock,' the girl answered.

'Then she must have stopped somewhere on the road, and I've missed her. I'd best run back as fast as I can,' Teddy said, hardly waiting to say good-bye.


He ran the whole way home without stopping, and when he came in sight of his house, he was much startled and surprised to see a crowd of people gathered round the door, and his surprise and alarm grew still greater when he saw the village doctor come out of the cottage and drive off in his gig, which had been waiting near the house. Poor Teddy's heart beat so fast he could hardly get along, and the short distance which he had yet to travel seemed almost interminable. When at last he reached the door, the people who stood round it tried to stop him from going in, till they had informed him of all particulars of what was going on inside, but Teddy wouldn't heed them. He did not seem to understand what they said, but pushing past them, he rushed into

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the little room. The first sight that met his eye was a bed made up on chairs across the room, on which lay his mother, her eyes closed, and her face so white and still, that Teddy felt sure she was dead, and with one loud cry of 'Mother! mother!' he fell fainting on the floor at her side.

Poor child, his little frame exhausted by long abstinence from food, and his long and hurried journey to and from the rectory, proved unequal to the shock he had received, and it was some time before he recovered from his swoon. The neighbours were most kind in attending, and used every effort to bring him round, while one motherly friend ran to her cottage, and quickly returned with a basin of hot bread and milk, thinking, wisely, that probably he had had no food for some hours, and that it would be the best medicine for him now. As soon as he had partially recovered, by slow degrees the food was given, and before long he was sufficiently well to hear the story of his mother's accident, and to rejoice in the good news that she was still alive and not actually in danger, though she might probably be ill for some time.

They told him that she had been found by a shepherd, who was going home late through the rectory grounds, lying by the roadside, cold and insensible, her empty basket close by, as it had fallen from her hand. He raised an alarm, and got help to carry her into one of the lodges, where she recovered partially from her faint, and told the people how she had slipped on the ice and fallen, hurting her leg and side so much, that the pain made her faint and she remembered no more. She now begged so earnestly to be taken home to Teddy, that they tried to move her on a shutter, but the moving her caused her so much pain, that she again became unconscious, and continued so till after her arrival at home. The doctor



had been fetched so quickly, that he was there before her, and helped to recall her to consciousness again. His examination proved that she had broken her leg badly above the knee, and severely sprained her right arm, while it was to be feared, from the pain in her side, that one or more ribs were broken.

When Teddy arrived, the leg had just been set, and Mrs Dale had again fainted from the pain of the operation. Teddy could hardly believe his senses when he saw her open her eyes, and heard her speak to him once more. He knelt down by her bedside, and laid his head on her pillow, his heart too full for speech, while great tears rolled down his cheeks. She soothed him as well as her weak state would permit, but she would not allow him to be taken away from her, till at last the sobs grew fainter, and the tears ceased, and he slept, forgetting all his sorrows in the sweet dreamless sleep of childhood. So soundly did he sleep, that at last one of the neighbours, a large powerful man, with a hand as tender as his heart, raised him gently in his arms and laid him on his own little bed, in a small room leading out of that in which his mother lay. Here they left him, and the woman who was waiting on her, having promised her that she would visit him from time to time during the night, lest he should be restless and frightened after the shock he had received.





## CHAPTER X.

**T**EDDY slept soundly and happily all through that weary night, when his mother lay in pain, which she strove to bear in silence, lest any sound she might make in her distress should disturb the sleeping boy.

Dreadful both to young and old is the first waking to the realisation of some great trouble, which the night's rest has in mercy hidden for a while from our memories. Teddy woke late, and started at seeing their neighbour, Mrs Jones, standing by his bed. He looked up at her, and suddenly the whole scene of the previous night flashed across his mind.

'Mother! how's mother?' he said, hastily jumping out of bed to go to her.

'She's better now, but you must keep very quiet,' Mrs Jones replied; 'she's been very faint and bad this morning with the pain, and we must have some brandy for her. I came to ask you if you know whether she's got any money, that we might send for some?'

'I don't know,' Teddy answered, 'but I don't believe she has any, for since she paid her rent, she has had to buy soap and things for the washing, and I know I heard

her say yesterday as she'd be glad when pay-day came, as she hadn't no money at all.'

Mrs Jones stood thoughtfully for a minute. 'We must have some,' she said at last. 'I'll run and ask the landlord at the Star, and I'm sure he'll spare her a little, and let you pay him when you can.'

'Oh! mother wouldn't like that,' Teddy answered, starting up in bed. 'Please, please don't put her in debt and she so ill; she'd never get well, she'd worry so when she knew it.'

'Nonsense, boy,' Mrs Jones said, beginning to be rather impatient with him. 'You wouldn't wish your mother to die for want of a drop of brandy when you can have it for the asking. I'll take good care it's paid for by-and-by, but I haven't just got the money in my pocket to pay for it now.'

'Well, I'll go if you think I ought to, but I should like to ask mother first,' Teddy said, getting out of bed and hurrying to get himself ready. Suddenly he stopped and clapped his hands together, saying aloud, 'Oh! how stupid I was to forget.' He opened his door and called Mrs Jones softly, lest he should disturb his mother.

'It's all right about the brandy,' he whispered to her when she came in answer to his call. 'I know where there's some money, and I'll run and get her some brandy at once.'

In a very few minutes Teddy had finished dressing and fetched the little money box, which contained his little hoard. He only waited to ask Mrs Jones how much will a bottle of brandy cost? She told him she thought about five shillings, but he hardly waited to hear her answer before he was running down the street as fast as his legs would carry him, to the inn at the other end of the village.

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Mrs Jones had hardly thought him gone, before he returned and handed the bottle to her.

‘It’s my own money, I saved it all,’ he replied, when Mrs Jones asked him about it. ‘I was to have had some boots, but I’m so glad now I hadn’t bought them, and I do hope mother ’ll soon be all right again.’





## CHAPTER XI.

**A**FTER Mrs Dale's accident, hard times came for her and Teddy. She recovered from her hurt to a certain extent, but she never was the same woman again. Her leg healed favourably, but she was lame for the rest of her life. This was a misfortune, but it would not have interfered much with her employment. But a worse trouble arose from the injury to her arm; it was not broken, but so badly sprained, that she never recovered her former use of it. It remained so weak and stiff that she could not possibly use it for washing or ironing again, and for many months she could not even sew. She was therefore obliged to give up all her work, and though a small subscription was made for her amongst her former employers, the money so gained was soon exhausted by the many expenses of her long illness, and when Lady Day drew near she had no money, and she told Teddy she must sell some of her furniture to make up the rent, and then they must leave their house and find a small lodging in which to live, with such help as the parish would give her.

Sad indeed was Teddy, when his mother had told him her plans. He looked at his mother, now so frail and

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delicate looking, and tears came into his eyes as he thought of her having to leave the house, which had been hers ever since she had come to it with her young husband on their wedding-day.

She tried hard to speak cheerfully and hopefully of her future, and said again and again that she knew the God of the widow and the fatherless would take care of them in their time of need; but Teddy would not feel cheerful, he had lived but poorly of late, and a hungry soul is not often a brave one.

• His heart was so full, he could not say anything to comfort his mother, and the tears were so near his eyes that he dare not stay longer in sight of her pale sad face, so he took his cap from its nail, and saying he wanted to run out for a few minutes, he went out of the cottage and wandered away, he hardly knew where, in search of some quiet place where he could cry out the trouble that seemed to be breaking his heart. He strayed on and on, out of the village and up a long green lane, which was always a favourite walk, shaded in summer and sheltered in winter by the trees whose boughs arched it overhead, forming one of the grand cloisters which adorn the great temple of Nature's God.

Here the banks were bright with primroses, and the air was sweet with the breath of the violet and hawthorn blossom, and gay with the joyous notes of the feathered songsters whom the spring time wakens into gladness.

Teddy loved the birds and flowers, but to-day he heeded them not; he wandered on with lowered head and downcast eyes, looking neither on the right hand or the left, but the sweet spring voices would make themselves heard. First, a blackbird, singing loudly,

roused him from his sad musings, then a pair of thrushes broke into an animated discussion in a bush at his side, a squirrel ran up a great oak tree, and paused half-way to look at him with its round bright eye, and soon Teddy forgot his woes for a time as he gathered a sweet bunch of primroses and violets, adding here and there a tender green fern leaf or a straggling bit of young ivy as he had seen Mr Clark do when he had gone with him to gather flowers for the Easter decorations of the church. When Teddy's bunch of flowers had grown too large for him to carry, he bethought him that it was time for him to return, as the days were not yet very long, though the unusual mildness of the season had made it seem later than it really was.

He turned then on his homeward way, his hands clasping his flowery treasures, and he had gone but a few steps when he met a lady in a Bath chair, drawn by a donkey, which was led by a boy, who held the rein. The lady he knew well by sight, though he had never spoken to her. She was Miss Grace Paget, daughter of a former rector of Ashton, and had been a cripple from her birth, and a sad invalid almost all her life. Teddy had often heard from his mother of her patient endurance of much sad suffering, and of the happy, bright spirit with which she bore her lonely, painful life.

As Teddy passed her and touched his cap in recognition of the kindly greeting she always gave to every child, he had a sort of feeling for her which he never remembered to have had before. 'She's got troubles too, worse than ours,' he said to himself, and urged by a sudden impulse to show his sympathy with her,

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he turned back and held out his bunch of wild flowers, saying—

‘Please ’m, will you have them?’

Miss Paget took the flowers with a smile of pleasure, that it did Teddy good to see.

‘Thank you so much. You don’t know how I love them, and I can’t gather them myself,’ she said in her sweet voice, as she took them from Teddy’s hand.

She then asked Teddy his name, and enquired most kindly for his mother, promising to send her some soup and jelly, or anything she fancied, now she was ill.

Teddy touched his cap, and ran home quite cheered and happy to tell his mother of his meeting with Miss Paget, and the evening which had begun so sadly, ended quite cheerfully, as the thought of her reminded Mrs Dale of many little stories of events at the rectory, when Miss Grace was a little girl and Mrs Dale herself was a little nursery maid.

For many days after his meeting with Miss Paget, Teddy always managed to find time to gather a little bunch of spring flowers, which he left daily at Miss Paget’s door. Sometimes they were gathered in the pouring rain, or some miles were traversed in search of them, but in spite of difficulties, he always got them, and Miss Paget was quite delighted to see with what taste and care they were arranged.

She longed to reward the boy for his kind thought of her, but she waited to see how best to serve him. She would not give him money, as she felt it was not the way he would wish his pretty gifts to be received. She watched for an opportunity of doing him some lasting service, though he little thought his affairs were being cared for by so kind a friend. Meanwhile Teddy did

not neglect Mr Tanner. He still worked for him every Saturday, but he could not save his poor wages now. Every penny was wanted as soon as it came, and he had ceased even to hope for new boots, though the ones he now wore were in a pitiable plight, and could no longer afford him the slightest protection against mud or water.





## CHAPTER XII.

**S**O the days went by much too fast, Mrs Dale thought, as it wanted only ten days to the quarter, and she knew she must at once arrange to part with some of her furniture, in order to get money for her rent.

Teddy went as usual to Miss Paget's house with his little bunch of flowers, but much to his surprise, when the servant took it from his hand, she asked him to come in, as her mistress wanted to speak to him.

Teddy accordingly followed her into Miss Paget's pretty little sitting room, where she lay on the couch, where almost all her life was passed. She received him with her usual kind manner, and after talking to him some time about his mother and his school work, she asked him whether he would like to take a regular place as servant boy, during the hours when he was not required by the law to be at school.

She then told him that the boy who had for some time been living with her to help in the house and garden, and drive her donkey, was going away the next day, and she thought Teddy might very well take his place. She promised to feed and clothe him, and to give him wages sufficient to prove a most valuable help to his poor

mother, now that she was unable to work for her own living.

Teddy could hardly believe his ears, he thought he must be dreaming, and that he should wake from his dream to find that all these bright visions had vanished into air ; but no, Miss Paget handed him a letter, which looked and felt very real, to give his mother, and she said that the very next Monday he might come at seven in the morning to begin his work. She even promised to spare him every Saturday, that he might go to Mr Tanner, till he had found another boy, for Teddy, like an honourable fellow, would not throw over his old friend, who had been the first to give him a helping hand.

On his return home, mother and son rejoiced together over the good fortune which had come to them, and their happiness seemed to be complete, when the landlord insisted on their remaining in the old house, and promised to wait a little for his rent.





### CHAPTER XIII.

**M**R TANNER was delighted to hear Teddy's good news, and he told him not to have any scruples about leaving him, as his own son was getting a big boy now, and was able to give him what help he wanted.

'Come to me as usual next Saturday,' he said, when Teddy took leave of him; 'that will be two days before you go to your new place, and then you shall show my boy how to do the work, for no one need do it better than you can, Ted; so you can come to me for a character when you want one, and you'll get a good one. You're a worthy son of your mother, and I can't say better for you than that.'

Teddy blushed to hear himself so warmly commended, but it made him very happy to hear he had so well satisfied his kind employer, and he made up his mind to earn an equally good report in his new place.

The following Saturday he was punctually at Mr Tanner's house at the appointed time, and did his best to show his young successor how all the work was to be done. When the time came for him to go home he locked up the workshop as usual, and took the key to Mr Tanner in his own house. His master took the key from

his hand, and asking him to sit down for a minute, he went out of the room, and Teddy heard him go upstairs and cross the room over that in which he was sitting. After a minute or two he came back bringing a parcel in his hand.

'Teddy, my boy,' he said, when he had shut the door, 'you've got more kind friends than you think for, and so we all have, for we are apt to forget when we are in trouble that there is One watching over us, who knows it all and will help us if we trust in Him. He has been taking care of you and your good mother, Ted, and has put it into the hearts of several in this place to give to your necessity. At our school meeting last Tuesday a little subscription was made to fit you out for your new place, and to help your mother with her rent. You know we are all poor men, and have not the means to do all we wish, but here is a pound which we collected in the room, and I wish to show my regard and affection for you by asking you to accept from me, as a parting gift, a pair of good new boots.

THE END.

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